The High Way

CAROLINE ATWATER MASON

Lord Bourow

THE HIGH WAY

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THE HIGH WAY

By

CAROLINE ATWATER MASON

Author of "A Lily of France," "The Little Green God," "The Spell of Italy," etc.

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To
MY HUSBAND

But to every man there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way,
And the high soul climbs the high way,
And the low soul gropes the low;
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.

But to every man there openeth
A high way and a low,
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall go.

—JOHN OXENHAM.

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BOOK I

THE STARTING OF THE WAYS

I

THE NOVICE

PETERBORO, a University town *par excellence* for a century, is now by way of transformation into a commercial centre. This by reason of two industries which, springing up within its quiet precincts, in a score of years have become of far-reaching importance. The industries provide, the one buttons, the other, electricity.

The University, of ancient and honorable foundation, once on the town's frontier, is now not far from the heart of its business life. The Divinity School on a low hill above a quiet stream, placed outside the city limits, as suited to contemplation and scholastic pursuits, is now not only in the heart of a close-built residence quarter, but is separated only by the stream from the vast electrical works, beyond which again lies the huddle of cheap tenement houses for operatives. Nevertheless, within the Divinity Quadrangle, defended as it is by massive walls and an iron gate, there lingers still an atmosphere of academic seclusion and repose.

Opposite this pillared gate of entrance, at the far end of the enclosure formed by tall, brick buildings, stands the chapel, not conspicuously taller than they except for the clock tower which rises above Gothic doors. Grass, with small hawthorn and hemlock trees, fills

the central spaces of the Quadrangle. In the midst of these a forgotten sun-dial rusts in disuse, the chapel clock having proved more immediately opportune.

On an afternoon of late September in the year 1916 the chapel clock, striking with slow impressiveness, announced five, and upon the stroke the body of students, assembled for devotional exercises, breaking up, streamed out into the Quadrangle. The stream was not deep, nor was its flow rapid or copious, being in numbers composed of little more than sixty men. As it subsided a student, coming out alone, stood for a moment looking about him with keenly measuring eyes,—a tall, personable youth of twenty-one or two, whose clothes sat well upon him, and whose eyes held the buoyant challenge of one who expects nothing ill of the world or of his fellows.

However, some sense of being cabined and confined in the Divinity entourage seemed now to stir in him for, when overtaken by another straggler, following in his wake as he moved forward down the flagged walk, the young man turned with a quick motion and smile, and said:

"I beg your pardon. Do you suppose there is anything in the way of an athletic field around here?"

"Shannon, isn't it?" asked the other, holding out his hand with a smile which warmed the stranger's heart. "I have met your father, heard you were coming. Oh, yes, indeed! But I hope you haven't come here with the idea in your head that this is a cloister or a young ladies' boarding-school. We are quite up on athletics in these days at Peterboro."

"Oh, then, you are not a Junior! Why should you be? I was stupid enough to feel as if this was first day in Peterboro for everybody because it was for me. You are ——?"

"I am Conrad, Barton Conrad. This is my last year. Glad to meet you, Shannon. If you have time I can take you now out through Arnold Hall and show you our perfectly good field. It lies along the river. Therefore it has the advantage of an unbroken view of the Electrical Works!"

While Conrad spoke, walking on by his side, the newcomer observed that he was lame, also of frail physique. Thus he was smitten with compunction at his overhaste in the quest for athletic facilities.

As they returned to the Quadrangle, the field surveyed, Conrad now under promise to accompany the other to his room, they met and passed an elderly man of strongly marked appearance. He was tall, very lean, very erect, very distinguished, very austere of aspect. Yet as, turning, he saluted them with formal courtesy a smile strikingly illuminated his face, as a sudden breaking out of the sun sometimes transforms a gray and wintry landscape.

"Glad to see you back, Mr. Conrad." The speaker's moderation of manner and word was touched with a kindliness beyond question. "You are looking fairly well, I think. But slow down this term. You overworked a little last year I remember. And this is ——?"

"This is Mr. Shannon—of Melrose, I believe." Conrad turned a glance of whimsical question then

towards the chapel clock. "We have been acquainted for precisely seven minutes. I charged him with being Shannon on a guess, and he did not deny it."

"He seems then to rest under the suspicion," responded the old man. "A good name to bear," he added as he took the student's hand. "We all know of your father. I am glad to welcome you to Peterboro." With which he resumed his walk towards the Quadrangle gate, leaving the two younger men to hasten on their way to the brick building confronting them, Palfrey Hall, in which Shannon was quartered.

"But do tell me the gentleman's name!" that youth exclaimed as they went. "You were named. I was named. I am of no consequence whatever. You probably are. But I am willing to say that he is of immensely more consequence than either of us at present has ever dreamed of being. I take it he is a professor?"

"Is it possible that I did not introduce you properly? Oh, yes," Conrad added pensively; "perfectly possible. I always do the wrong thing. Still I really think you ought to have known by intuition. Who could that man be ——"

"But Douglas Gregg? Is he really Douglas Gregg?" Shannon was opening a numbered door in a long, dusky corridor now.

"Why, of course," murmured Conrad. Obedient to the other's gesture he had entered and now threw himself into a leather-covered armchair, the only object in the long narrow room suggesting physical relaxation. "Gregg, of course! You see, Shannon, he is

such a lion here in Peterboro that we take it for granted nobody can fail to know him. I guess that is my best way out of it," he added despondently.

"Oh, cheer up!" cried Shannon. "You're all right. I might have known if I had been intuitive. He's the man whose reputation brought me to Peterboro. I ought to have been on the lookout for him."

Conrad made no reply. Vaguely Shannon felt that some shadow had fallen upon them. A drear look met him in the other's eyes which turned then quickly and rested as if for refuge on the narrow mantel along which a few photographs had been placed.

"Did you only come this morning?" he asked. "You have given your cell a touch of livableness already."

Rising, Conrad crossed the narrow room and examined the photographs. Shannon came to his side.

"This will be your father, I take it?"

Conrad studied with some intentness the profile presentment of a man in mid-life. "And this your mother," he declared rather than asked.

This picture occupied him longer than the first.

"A lovely face," he said as he returned it to its place. "Some way it reminds one of that phrase, she 'kept all these things and pondered them *in her heart.*'"

Conrad spoke shyly, with obvious hesitation, but Shannon welcomed his words with a frankly responsive smile.

"You have read her all right. I think all things in the universe with my mother are 'interpreted by love.'"

There was a little silence while Conrad stood with yet another photograph in his hand. Shannon went back to his place in the desk-chair and began rearranging his books.

"And who is this, if I may ask?" came Conrad's question.

"Oh, that is my sister,—that is, I always call her my sister."

"Dangerous, calling anything as pretty as that your sister if she isn't your sister," commented Conrad dryly. "A raving, tearing beauty, you know."

"Yes, Amy is good-looking," replied Shannon carelessly. "We have been brought up together. Her mother was a very intimate cousin of my mother's and deposited her in Mother's keeping when she died, I forget how many years ago. But Amy is just a schoolgirl. That photograph looks older than she does."

Conrad returned to his armchair without further comment. With a shade of relief that personalities were concluded Shannon began to ask him various questions concerning the religious service from which they had just come. Conrad assured him that this was of a wholly special character, "chapel" being usually extremely simple.

"This is the annual extra service of welcome, you see, for you newcomers. Then you will get your welcome again next week when we are all entertained at President Loring's house. In some grandeur too, I assure you. He has one of the sumptuous houses on Grafton Avenue and lives in pretty good style."

"Grafton Avenue?"

"Oh, I forgot you were a tenderfoot. Excuse me, Shannon. It is our tophole residential street. Way over beyond the 'Varsity. Prexy shepherds us in a Rolls-Royce."

"And Professor Gregg. . . . Does he live in splendour, too?"

"Perish the thought! Plain living and high thinking in his narrow brown frame house on Locust Street. Linoleum on the front hall, strip of linen on the front stairs to save wear. Carpets coming clear to the edges as they used to when Victoria ascended the throne. Marble-topped tables. All that sort of thing. Why, he has only three thousand dollars a year and an invalid wife, invalid all her life, and, even so, bent on giving every cent she can to 'causes.' Not much outward splendour there, believe me."

"But President Loring,—is his salary so very large?"

"No, no, no, my dear Shannon! You have much to learn of Peterboro. They have here a very influential and rather large class whom I should be sorry to call *nouveaux riches* because of invidious associations with that term. All is understood if you say, 'They have Electric.'"

Seeing Shannon's puzzled expression Conrad continued:

"Peterboro's great Electrical Works yonder are making money at a positively astounding rate. Half a dozen men, old residents here, are on the inside. Years ago they gave the signal, at the right moment, to their personal friends: *Buy Electric Now.* 'Rollo ac-

cordingly did so.' Thus Grafton Avenue has arisen. Extremely elegant houses."

"And President Loring has 'Electric'?"

"He has. And a number of other good and great men. Dr. Chance for instance."

"Oh, yes, Dr. Chance. He was the speaker this afternoon. He is pastor of All Souls' Church, isn't he? My father often speaks of him and of his great success."

"Yes, Chance is a very effective man. Shannon, will you excuse me if I ask you a very personal question? I am consumed with curiosity."

"Ask what you like. I will answer or not as I like. That's fair."

"Well, you simply can't imagine how utterly different you are from the average man who comes, a Junior, to Peterboro. I understand, to be sure, that you are a minister's son. But that is no reason why you should ever go in for the ministry. They usually don't. You haven't the cut of the jib, though I can't tell why. It may be in your college. Where did you graduate?"

"I haven't graduated. Should have this year if I hadn't decided to come to Peterboro. I have been a student in Stevens Technology Institute for three years,—specialized in hydraulics."

Conrad drew a long breath.

"That seems to get us no nearer," he remarked, shaking his head musingly. "They seldom come into the ministry that way."

Shannon laughed.

"I haven't the smallest objection, Conrad," he said, "to telling you all there is to my 'call' if they still talk about a 'call to the ministry.' I had no idea of it for myself, don't think I ever considered it,—until last year. I had gone in for an engineering course at Stevens, you see, had been there a year when the war broke out. Well, the war is at the bottom of it. Last Spring I simply was bowled over by a sense of the awful blight of the new paganism,—materialism,—whatever you choose to call it. I saw how all the fellows, practically all I knew or used to know in High School, were going in for technical preparation of some kind, all bent on increasing wealth or methods of physical development like myself. Who was going in for Christian work? I hardly knew a man, although I was brought up in a minister's family. Suddenly in those dreadful first months it came to me that the spiritual end of this civilization of ours had got to be kept up or a reversion to paganism was fairly on. Perhaps I was wrong, but I was impressed that material science, in all its thousand and one lines, was shoving God, the sense of God, the practice of the presence of God, out of His universe. That it was as if Christ had not lived, had not died. If I could do anything it was up to me. . . . That is all."

There was a long silence between them. Conrad broke it at last.

"And so you came to Peterboro for spiritual preparation to fight the fight for faith?" He spoke hurriedly, under his breath, emphasis on the last word. Plainly he spoke in stress of feeling.

"Yes," answered Shannon simply, but with a certain unconscious solemnity.

Suddenly then Conrad rose, took his hat, crossed the room with extended hand to Shannon and murmured a brief word of thanks. In another moment he was gone.

"Quaint chap, all right," was Shannon's mental comment, "but I like him."

II

THE SYMPOSIUM

IN the city of Peterboro, in the library of Judge Sawyer, a dozen men or more were gathered on an Autumn evening a few weeks later. Dinner was just over.

At a table by the chimney-corner a butler stood ready to pour coffee and supply the guests with cigars. The atmosphere of the book-lined room grew steadily hazier, noisier, more redolent of fumes and fragrance. Meanwhile the log-fire in the big chimney gave its glow; the effect of the Judge's excellent dinner, his wine, his coffee, his cigars, the contagion of liberal cheer belonging to his house, were perceptible in the rising tide of good fellowship.

It was with some small difficulty that, when the clock struck half-past nine, Judge Sawyer brought his guests to attention. As they dropped complacently into easy chairs drawn into a semicircle about the fire, he announced, taking his own place beside a table with sudden assumption of gravity, "The Symposium will now come to order. Is there any business?"

Silence followed.

"One very pleasurable duty is mine," then declared the Judge, "before calling upon the chairman of the evening, my neighbour, Dr. Loring, to take his place,"

and he bowed with a touch of ceremony to the gentleman on his left who chanced to be the President of the Divinity School.

"A new member has been, with his own cordial assent, elected to our number. He could not join us at dinner but I expect him now at any moment. Professor Gregg, I think that this fact may come as news to you, the election having taken place in your absence."

"At the last meeting, I gather. Quite correct, Judge. I had not then returned from my vacation. Very well. Pray proceed."

The speaker, Douglas Gregg, even in this group of younger men, gave an impression of unimpaired mental and physical vigour. The lines of thought and study in his clean-cut, clean-shaven face, the brooding concentration in the eyes, something of intellectual authority belonging to the man, made him easily here *primus inter pares.*

Hardly had the Professor spoken when the sound of the house-door opening and closing was heard and Judge Sawyer exclaimed, "There he is now! Good work." The library door thrown wide, a servant announced:

"Dr. Hugh Gregg."

There entered then a broad-shouldered, heavily built man of forty or more, a man with round, high-coloured face, graying hair and no marked distinction of appearance beyond a keen, even hard glance through heavily framed spectacles. Seeing him a flicker of surprise and something more than surprise crossed

Professor Gregg's face, to pass instantly as Dr. Loring again turned to him.

"You will forgive us, Professor, for springing this little surprise on you to-night. It was the wish of the Symposium to carry through this action without your knowledge. In this choice we seek to honour you, our most eminent member. We would honour your son, who has so early won more important honours for himself in his profession. Above all, we are honoured ourselves in being now able to count both Greggs, father and son, members of the Symposium."

Every man had risen during this little speech. All eyes were directed to the newcomer, but his own were fixed upon his father's face. Crossing swiftly to him their hands and eyes met in the silent encounter of strong men, albeit they presented a startling contrast.

"All right, Hugh," the old man said briefly, with a gesture as of passing the other on; "you're rather young for us, I should have said, but I think you will make good."

The new member adequately welcomed, Dr. Loring took the chair, and after a speech in which Gregg, the father, was described as "a seer" and "prophet," and Gregg, the son, as the "skilled physician" and "devoted student of science," he introduced Professor Bolles of "the University." Bolles would read a paper on "The Higher Hedonism," this to be followed by the usual free, informal discussion.

Apologizing for what might seem a cynical incongruity in his choice of a subject of consideration in the present crisis of Europe's agony, Professor Bolles,

whose department in the University was psychology, proceeded to set forth with careful elaboration the ancient thesis that human actions are right in proportion as they tend on the whole to promote happiness; wrong as they ultimately produce pain and suffering. "Prudential Wisdom" is the guide of life.

In general the essayist took the position that man has no moral authority nor obligation higher than a well-balanced self-interest. In the discussion which followed disagreement with Professor Bolles' positions was expressed by Dr. Chance, pastor of the Church of All Souls with which Bolles was associated. The clergyman noted his sense of a certain flaw in the Professor's conception.

Dr. Chance, emphatically and scrupulously clerical of attire, was noticeable for massive good looks and general bonhomie. His urbanity was emphasized rather than diminished, as he volunteered criticism, by the genial temper and deferential attitude towards the essayist with which it was offered. He seemed to assure Professor Bolles, "You and I understand each other perfectly; this much in opposition belongs to the cloth." But a different note was struck when, as Chance concluded his contribution to the discussion, Dr. Loring called upon Dr. Hugh Gregg to give the Club the benefit of his opinions. With no introduction of a flattering nature to the Symposium, no apology for the fact that this was his first appearance among them and probably as the youngest man there, the physician asserted his position as squarely with that of Professor Bolles.

"Many convictions," he said, "which an earlier generation held as incontrovertible were so only from the passing point of view and naturally give place to increasing knowledge. Dr. Chance's theories have been widely held in the past but they seem to me no longer tenable,—that is outside the clergy. Obligation, of course, is a perpetual factor in human affairs but it is the obligation to further the progress of the race according to scientific principles. Bentham's frank remark that the word 'ought' or 'ought not' should be banished from our vocabulary as concerns morals, quoted by Professor Bolles, struck me as an indication of his accurate thinking. As for the present war, there can be no question that the greatest good of the greatest number demands the sacrifice which the nations are making at this moment. The bloodshed is neither more nor less moral than vivisection. Only sentimentalists and women would put a stop to vivisection or to the war, simply because the price is high. Life, somebody says, should teach us contempt of death, and death contempt of life. When popular intelligence is a little better educated, in the direction suggested by the paper we have been listening to, there will be, for instance, no further scruples in society at large regarding the elimination of morons in every community, and of such other defective or superfluous beings as encroach upon the sum total of common happiness and safety."

Dr. Hugh's position was eagerly endorsed and as eagerly opposed by one and another. Midnight was long past when Dr. Loring, interrupting the tumult of

talk which had long since passed the parliamentary stage, again called the Club to order. An expectant silence settled at once upon the company.

"I am reminded," he said, "that the hour is passed for breaking up. But I am also impressed by the fact that, while we have heard pro and con from the bench and the bar to-night, from medical science and psychical science, from the clergy and the University on this theme,—the ablest thinkers who, perhaps, could be assembled in Peterboro,—no word has been spoken by Professor Gregg. Above all present, you, Professor, have the right to speak on this subject with authority. You must not remain silent."

His challenge, received with a general murmur of approval, found the elder Gregg wearing a face like a mask, stiff and set. He responded, however, in a measured, half-meditative tone, the tone to which the Club was accustomed, a quiet smile tempering as he spoke the severity of his expression.

"You of this group know very well what you may expect from me in a discussion of a theme like this," he said. "The categorical imperative has not, I believe, been superseded as yet. Utilitarianism or Hedonism,—benevolent or otherwise,—is and will always be, on the whole—whatever form its recrudescence takes—materialistic, atheistic, unmoral. As such it is a doctrine only too well suited to the fever of the present hour. We may expect to see doctrines akin to this gathering heat and momentum. But they will have their day and sink again. They are symptomatic, accidental, not permanent. God has made man in His

own image and the canons of Epicurus in none of their variants can satisfy him long."

The session closed with this deliverance of "the Seer." As the guests came out upon the street they found a light snow falling, the first of the season. Several motor cars stood in waiting. Dr. Hugh Gregg urged his father to avail himself of his machine, but the older man drawing away from his detaining hand said:

"No, thank you, Hugh. Either you would make me late or I you, for I know you have a visit to make yet at the hospital. Really I would rather walk. It always takes six blocks of fresh air to counteract the Symposium's coffee and tobacco. They so soak into a man's system. Good-night."

With this he took the arm of Dr. Chance who, residing in the same quarter of the city, had the habit of serving as the old Professor's bodyguard on these occasions.

As they walked on Chance queried:

"I wonder if you know anything, Doctor, of a young fellow who has entered the Seminary this term by the name of Shannon? His father was a classmate of mine in college. He has written me of his son's coming to Peterboro, recommends him to connection with my church."

"Yes, I know the lad. Hardy Shannon—isn't that the name?" The other assented. "A good boy all around I count him."

"I haven't seen him yet but I expect good things of him. His father you know belongs to a very fine

old family. The Shannons are aristocrats in the best sense."

"Oh, yes, I know something of Charles Shannon. He belongs distinctly to the Old School, has never gone beyond Paley's Evidences and Butler's Analogy, you know, but he has the tradition of culture all the same. He had an elder son,—perhaps you do not remember him,—in our school some years ago.—His name was Park, a handsome chap, rather brilliant, but erratic. He and I never got on well together. A good student, though. He broke off and went to Germany, if I remember right, about half-way through his Divinity course. His father is of a different stamp altogether."

"The father must have done good solid work to stay in Melrose thirty years. That church is rated as of a very substantial sort."

"One of the best, no doubt. Thoroughly respectable. But this young Shannon may be as little like his father as he is like his brother, it strikes me."

"Well, Charley never had an atom of imagination or of daring, mental or moral, I must admit that. He is a literalist through and through."

"The mother then is probably responsible for a good deal, Chance, for this youngster is alive and alight with fires within. We shall make something of him if the war lets him alone."

"Which it won't."

"Which it probably will not. Meanwhile, although he doesn't come into my classes by good rights until next year, I have asked him to help me as far as he

can spare the time in getting my new book into shape for the publishers."

"Have you really? Is he well qualified, do you find?"

"Perfectly. Also he is temperamentally *simpatica.*"

"Now this is very interesting." Dr. Chance was plainly more than ordinarily interested. "For, as it happens, I have been considering whether Shannon might not be a man of sufficient calibre to collaborate with me this winter, as assistant you know, in our church work, chiefly the pastoral end. This naturally would only be if it did not conflict with your requirements."

"No conflict whatever. My book will be finished now shortly."

"Well, if you find him '*simpatica*' as well as 'alive' and 'alight' he ought to serve my turn capitally. Sounds like a paragon."

"Oh, decidedly a paragon!" returned the other coolly. "Have him by all means. But apply him with caution, Chance, to labours with the fair and susceptible portion of your parish. Paragons are perilous persons."

"If you will answer for his valour I will answer for his discretion," returned Chance confidently. "I know the father. A more cautious man never swung a parish."

Chance bade the old Professor good-night at the door of his very unpretentious dwelling, 17 Locust Street, and went his way full of self-gratulation on his endorsement of Shannon.

As Gregg, entering his house, passed down the hall to his study he was confronted by the young man himself, already an habitué of the house. Passing him with respectful greeting, Shannon said:

"Yes, just done, Professor Gregg. That is, up to page 187. Good-night," and so disappeared, leaving the house to silence and its master.

When Dr. Hugh Gregg, having made a visit at the Peterboro General Hospital, returned to his home, the city's breadth separated from that of his father, he found its lower rooms still lighted. An extremely pretty woman, dressed in diaphanous evening gear, reclined upon a *chaise longue* in the small library which he entered, a cigarette between her fingers, a novel in her lap.

"Hello, Hugh!" she exclaimed. "Two o'clock, isn't it? What kept you so late?"

The Doctor had turned to a desk and seating himself before it, opened a note-book, made an entry therein, then looked up.

"Hello, hello, Lyde. Where have you been in that ridiculous frock?"

"At that musicale of the Marshes. You've been ——? Oh, I remember now. This was the evening for that ancient and honourable set of sages, the Symposium,—is that the name?—to initiate you into their esoteric mysteries, wasn't it? Do tell every word."

"Please excuse me. There were too many."

"Was your father there? Was he pleased about your being made a member?"

"I think not exactly."

"I wonder why not."

"Well, you know the old gentleman may not fancy my observing precisely what manner of free-thinking company he keeps."

"Hugh, that is nonsense! Your father is not like that. I'll stand up for him though he doesn't like me."

Silence followed this remark. Mrs. Gregg pursued her subject, thoughtfully.

"I wonder why he doesn't like me. Many people do, in fact, most. Hugh,"—this after a pause,—"do you suppose it is because I smoke?"

Her husband had risen and was moving towards the door.

"Why, possibly. Not definitely because you smoke, but because you're the kind of woman who cares to smoke and all the rest of it."

"But you like me, Hugh, don't you?"

Gregg crossed to her chair and bent to kiss her cheek.

"Good-night, Lyde. Yes, I like you very much. I hope the children are in bed?" this with a trace of anxiety.

"My dear man, what are you thinking of? Home at such an hour as this? I should say not. There was dancing after the music and I stayed on a while for it, but Dame and Pyth were for going on forever, so I tucked Dame under Laura Ely's wing and came home."

Here Mrs. Gregg yawned, then added, "I don't suppose they'll be here before five o'clock."

Hugh Gregg, his hand on the door-knob, looked down at his feet a little miserably. His eyes were heavy, the muscles of his face sagged with weariness.

"Going the pace, aren't they?" he commented grimly.

"Yes. Pyth said to me yesterday in that quaint way of his, 'Mother, Dame and I are getting a little wild, you know. At least they say so,'" and she laughed a long, low laugh of pure amusement, then murmured to herself as she heard her husband's footsteps ascending the stair:

"Poor old Hugh! Brought up on Watts' hymns and 'Line upon Line'!"

Then slipping suddenly from her luxurious nook she stepped to the door and called:

"Hugh! I want to tell you something."

"All right. Go ahead. Make it a paragraph."

"I am almost sure Laura Ely is going to let me plan the decorations for her new house."

"Is that so? That is mighty nice. Now don't make it too hedonish ——" Gregg broke off, then added, "I mean heathenish, Lyde. I'm so sleepy I can't talk straight."

III

DOCTOR CHANCE'S DAUGHTER

"YOU know I approved of you, Mary, the moment I first set eyes on you."

"How flattering!"

"You needn't be especially flattered. Really, I think the chief reason was because you chose not to come to our church."

"Nancy! what an extremely odd thing to say,—even for you." Mary Minot flushed a little as she looked serious demur at her friend, Nancy Chance, only child of the pastor of the Church of All Souls. These two were sitting in an intimate up-stairs bay-window in Dr. Chance's home. The month was December, the time mid-afternoon.

"Not odd at all. Just think a minute and you will see what I mean. You came to Peterboro and the Peyton School from Annisdale with a note of introduction to Grandmother. You belonged to a church of our faith and order. It was the natural and expected thing that you should come to our church. It took some social or moral or other kind of courage, I'm not sure what, not to."

Mary Minot shook her head but Nancy pursued her setting-forth.

"So courage was one thing! The other was that you wanted a religious church. You would. But few do, coming new to Peterboro. They want to belong

to the correct thing socially, and that is what we are. Our church is not a bit more religious than you thought it was, Mary, when you fixed your choice on that dreary hen-coop of a mission chapel in Webster Street. You with your seeing eyes!"

"Nancy, you use the word 'religious' so recklessly! You make me sound like a self-righteous Pharisee, and I believe I am not that."

"No, you are not, love. Calm yourself. I quite believe that you may not be conscious of precisely what was at work when you made your decision. But the fact is, you made it, not being a Pharisee even remotely, but being deep down, out of sight, religiously minded. Our church people used to be like that, after a fashion, anyway. Now our religion is chiefly sociology. Also ritual. The more ecclesiastical observances we use, the less religious we seem to grow. For instance,—we never introduced recital of the Apostles' Creed into our plain, Puritan service until, to my certain knowledge, Mary, we had ceased to believe in the truth of what the Creed declares. We look upon it now simply as an effective 'historic ornament' to the service."

Mary Minot shook her head gravely, her "seeing eyes," as her friend called them, dark with troubled question.

"You are saying what you have no right to say, Nancy, not to me, not even to yourself."

Nancy lifted her chin and smiled across at her friend a slow, beguiling smile.

"I am so much older than you, Mary. Life has

been all of one piece for you. I have had to look on at such a frightful lot of changes. It does make one hard. All I really try to say now is that the inward experience of religion, as you have it, is something that we of All Souls' Church parted with some time ago, when once we were properly educated according to the 'Modern Gospel.' You know what I mean,—what Peterboro Seminary stands for. We all know so much better than the Bible now, you see. Even me!" (The last three syllables sung in tune with mocking cadence.) "It is so interesting, correcting its mistakes, I find, that its teachings are easily lost sight of," she added pensively.

"Nancy, I don't know anything about the truth of what you are saying," rejoined Mary, "and I have an idea you don't know much more yourself."

Nancy Chance shrugged her shoulders. She was a slender girl of vigorous frame, swiftly expressive in speech and movement, her face subject to a like swiftness of change in expression.

"All the same you know now why I have liked you from that Sunday morning—let's see, when was it? Last winter, I guess. You remember I met you after church and one of our deadliest dowagers introduced you as a 'charming new follower of your dear father, Nancy'"—this was given with irresistible mimicry and Mary Minot laughed in spite of her underlying disapproval.

"Whereupon, with that inexorable conscience of yours, you gently but firmly, my Mary, informed me that you had decided to attend the Webster Street

Church regularly while you remained in Peterboro. It was so modestly phrased, as looking then for speedy discharge from Miss Peyton's, never dreaming of the hit you were to make!"

"Oh, Nancy," interjected Mary, her forehead knit now with remonstrance.

"On my honour as a gentleman," cried Nancy remorselessly, "I believe that it was only then and there that you made that momentous decision ——"

"If you please, Miss Chance."

A maid stood within the open door waiting to announce that tea was served in the drawing-room and that Mrs. Chance sent word to Miss Chance that the gentleman, who was to become her father's assistant, was calling, and would she come down.

The maid disappearing, Nancy dragged her friend with her as she proceeded to obey the summons.

"You've simply got to stay and have tea. At last we are to behold Dad's conquering hero! I'm crazy to see him myself, but he never accepts our bids to dinner, and, anyway, Dad seems to keep him thus far out of sight purposely. He is just a Seminary student, name Shannon, Hardy for first. Who knows what that name may signify?" Then under breath, as the two girls ran noiselessly down the softly carpeted stairs:

"Wouldn't it be funny if this Hardy Shannon should be pious too? Sometimes they are in Junior year, you know. Before the Major Prophet gets them. You know who the Major Prophet is ——?"

The last words were spoken as they crossed the hall

to enter the drawing-room. Mary Minot could not have answered the question even if she had cared to, which she did not.

The drawing-room which they entered was very costly in its appointments and very formal in its effect. The same was true of the elderly woman who rose to meet them. She was stately and stiff in a gown of black satin with transparent white bands at throat and wrists; a tiny widow's cap topped smooth gray hair, many jewelled rings were on her fingers. She advanced a step to greet Mary Minot. This done she presented to the girls, with ceremonious gravity, the young gentleman beside her, friend of Nancy's father, Mr. Shannon of Melrose.

Turning to the waiting tea-table Madame Chance was about to seat herself but was interrupted by Mary Minot at her elbow, excusing herself from remaining for tea on the plea of an immediate engagement, so, without fuss or flutter, departing.

Hardy Shannon, thus far scarcely differentiating the two girls, was conscious then, as he held the door open for Mary Minot, that something of delicate grace and charm had escaped him and vanished. Then, returning to the drawing-room, he found something vivid and challenging which remained to meet him in direct encounter with Nancy Chance.

But Dr. Chance's daughter, versed in the formalities of his house, left wholly to Dr. Chance's mother the introductory conversation. This harked back to the family history and contacts of the Chances and Shannons, slight and early though these might be.

Demurely and, in the main, silently attentive to their caller's requirements in the matter of tea and cakes, Nancy for fifteen minutes played the part of submissive, devoted daughter of the parsonage household to perfection. But she was taking in every detail of Hardy Shannon's personality the while and deciding that it was very good.

She liked a man to have his height and firm, athletic build. She liked the boyish way his hair had of not staying smooth, asserting itself in a curt wave across the forehead. She liked gray eyes like his,—they called up a line she had read in a small blue and gold volume of poetry in her grandmother's room,—" with an eye that takes the breath." Especially she liked the easy preference and deference which he showed her grandmother, she herself being quietly counted the lesser light. The matter-of-course fashion in which her own pose of self-effacement was accepted slightly nettled her, but attracted her, for it was sincere, not a pose. Nancy Chance had a flair for reality. Also she expected her inning later.

It came when her grandmother, excusing herself on account of lameness, asked her to show Mr. Shannon a portrait of Dr. Chance, painted by a famous artist, and only just hung above the dining-room mantel. The portrait was customarily pronounced a masterpiece, and it was Madame Chance's pride. Having led Shannon across the hall to the dining-room, Nancy stood aside in silence as he regarded the portrait, that of a handsome man in the youth of age wearing with distinction his ecclesiastical gown with the touch of

colour in its divinity doctor's hood; wearing also an expression of benevolent ecclesiastical authority, which would well have suited a bishop.

Nancy approved the young man's comments, they being confined to the technique of the painting rather than to characteristics of the subject, led him then across the room to windows whence a prospect of Peterboro of wide range was obtained. A wooded hill, facing the height on which her father's house stood, attracted Shannon's attention. It was Falconer's Heights, Nancy told him; you could get a glorious view from there. She was surprised that he had not climbed that steep long since. Shannon expressed penitence for his delinquency and the wish to make it good with all possible speed. Nancy's quick ear had caught the sound of voices in the drawing-room. Luckily other visitors had come in; Madame Chance would be occupied.

"Would you like to try it now?" she asked flashing the first smile Shannon had seen cross her face. He noticed how it changed the ensemble of it to unsuspected beauty.

"I should be perfectly delighted, if you will go as guide," he answered eagerly.

"Very good. It would be wrong for your Peterboro education to be neglected another day," Nancy responded. "Go you then to my grandmother, do your devoir on the portrait,—you can't overdo it, and make your adieux. I will meet you at the front door 'saddled and bridled and ready for flight' in just five minutes."

Turning, Nancy touched a bell, then instructed the maid who presented herself to do all that was required in assisting Madame Chance in further serving of tea in the drawing-room. This done she was up the staircase and out of sight by the time Shannon reached the threshold of the drawing-room.

She rejoined him in the prescribed five minutes at the house door, and very handsome in her furs and feathers he thought her. Dr. Chance's daughter possessed limitless ease and self-confidence, that he had already realized; and now he had a vague sense that she wore her clothes even with the same indefinable accent of originality which belonged to all that she said and did, and which allured if it did not charm.

Side by side they walked down the quiet street, the keen December air bringing its quickening of pulse and energy, each excessively curious about the other and each, secretly, filled with young exultation in escaping from the conventionalities of Madame Chance's tea-table. A breathless climb brought them to the crest of Falconer's Heights but not before the early dusk had begun to encompass the city, the vague outlines of surrounding plains and the horizon line of the sea.

"It is a little too late. We shall have to come again, Miss Chance," Hardy Shannon declared, surprised a little at his own boldness. She, not in the least surprised, assented casually but said, consulting her watch:

"Now if you're good for a dash down, running all the way, we can get the next car—they start only on the half hour—and be back in Market Square in time

for me to take you for a few minutes to our club rooms. I'll tell you about the club when we are in the car. Are you game?"

"Ready. One, two, three,—start," was the laughing answer.

In the car, struggling to regain her breath, her eyes shining with glee, Nancy gasped out:

"Well, you sure are a prize runner . . . I am half dead myself . . . but you breathe as softly as . . ."

"Well, as what, please?" he urged.

"As an infant Samuel at prayer," she replied and leaned back closing her eyes in a long breath of relief and relaxing.

"I see," Shannon said quietly. "Please rest now. Don't even be clever if you can help it."

"I like that," she murmured. For a time there was silence, then, all her forces replenished, Nancy embarked upon a recital, half drolling, half serious, of the aims and achievements of the club, her pet and protégé, to whose quarters in a "stuffy old block" they were now bound.

"First of all, it is not a church affair,—not in the least. We stumbled into creating it, three or four of us who were trying to do something worth while,—I mean something worth while on various lines. We were stumbling along, each trying to express himself or herself, you know, in music or art or literary work or something, and with no help or advice or audience even outside the perfectly worthless circles of personal friends and family. They never dare do anything

but admire. So we got together principally to tear each other's things to tatters. First we met at each other's houses, but as we have grown larger and really rather important for Peterboro I assure you, Mr. Shannon, we have found headquarters necessary. So we rented quite decent rooms and we each contributed a few derelicts in the way of tables and chairs from our fathers' attics, and books, the kind nobody wants to read, you know, and old magazines strewn around to make it look literary,—all that rubbish. But a really good piano and a few good pictures I can say we have."

"How often do you meet?"

"Once a week officially and on Wednesday. This is Friday. But the rooms are open every afternoon and almost always somebody drops in. We have a tiny kitchen—and a perfectly good outfit for serving tea and coffee and doing chafing-dish stunts, so it is a fairly fair haven when you want to get away"—from home she started to say but dropped it there.

"How very jolly it sounds! What does your club call itself? Have you a name?"

"Oh, yes. A brand new one. We could never hit upon one which suited everybody until just this last October. Mary Minot, one of our best, came back from her vacation having evolved precisely the name for us. It was adopted with ardour. Because none of us ever expects to be or could be *im*mortal—meaning of course on our especial lines—don't, for mercy's sake scent a heresy, Mr. Shannon!—we call ourselves 'the Mortals.' Accurate and adequate, don't you think?"

"Distinctly so. Is the author of this brilliant creation,—Mary Minot I think you called her,—the young lady whom I met for a moment at your house this afternoon?" Shannon asked.

"Yes. Why, of course! You did meet her just as she was leaving, didn't you? Isn't she dear?"

"Well, really, I am hardly qualified to judge. I have no doubt that she may be very dear to those who know her."

"Please don't quibble. You struck me as sincere at first and that is what I like. 'Dear,' as we girls use it, sums up a whole column of adjectives and saves argument. If I should say that Mary Minot was beautiful somebody would be sure to say her nose was too short or her chin too long or her skin too pale or some such idiotic thing. But nobody ever could or ever did say she wasn't *dear*. And she is beautiful, too."

At this point the two alighted in the Market Square, the city's main centre of activity, a sharply illuminated congeries of business buildings low and high, new and old, of kiosks and statues, of street-cars, motor-cars, trucks of merchandise, in ceaseless motion and commotion.

Guided by Nancy through the labyrinth of crossings, Shannon made his way to a far corner where, dashing into an office-building of no especial attraction, she touched an elevator call-bell with a certain air of proprietorship. Ushered presently into the rendezvous of the Mortals, four stories up, the young man recognized the accuracy of the description Nancy had given him

of its accessories. What he had by no means looked for was that, negligible and incongruous as were the various contributing factors, they had someway been combined into an artistic and inviting whole. Decidedly here was a fireside to which a man might often and gladly flee, with its curious mingling of the liberty of the impersonal and the privacy or near-privacy of home surroundings.

Silently Shannon took the armchair to which Nancy Chance beckoned him beside a deeply glowing wood-fire. The room was half lighted by shaded lamps and the air bore a spicy waft of resinous pine boughs burning.

Chilled with the long car ride preceded by the stiff race up hill and down, more tired than he would have admitted, Shannon yielded himself to the atmosphere of letting-go which belonged to the place. An unconscious craving for surcease of fresh impressions had hold of him.

Then he found himself vaguely perceiving the strange and rapid convolutions of two slender, supple figures silhouetted against a distant window. He accepted them without himself registering the faintest impression. They might be marionettes, they might be monkeys for all he cared. They let him alone. Then from some dim region behind him came the sound of Rachmaninoff's Prelude softly played. To this he consciously listened, for it did not break the spell which was upon him, but rather gave it voice, a voice potent and precious to Shannon.

The music ceased. The marionettes had disap-

peared. By and by he was aware of a pair of dark eyes regarding him with ironical concern, and Nancy Chance setting a small tray on a small table by his side dropped down on a cushion before the fire.

"I certainly led you a race, didn't I?" she commented casually. "I am tired to death myself. They have made us some coffee. Here is yours," and she filled a cup from a quaint silver jug, then called his attention to a plate of sandwiches which suddenly made him conscious that he was ravenously hungry.

Quite as a matter of course Shannon accepted Nancy's service, consuming her refreshment without apology or praise. Which pleased her.

"You must come here often," she said as he rose to go.

"I am a mortal man," he answered. "Do you think I could qualify? By the way was that you who played the Prelude—Rachmaninoff's?"

"Yes. Do you like it?"

"I like it particularly. My mother plays his music. I think it took me all the way back to Melrose for a bit. And what were those imps or goblins who were twisting themselves and each other into double knots down there?" and he pointed to the far window. "They are not there now."

Nancy bit her lip for a second then exclaimed:

"Oh, yes, those were the Gregg twins, Dame and Pyth, everybody calls them,—short for Damon and Pythias—being extra devoted to each other. Their sponsors in baptism named them Walter and Dorothy. At least there is such a legend. They were teaching

each other one of the new dances, probably. I made them stop and get to work making your coffee."

"I see you rule the roost here. Why is their name Gregg?"

"Quite definitely because your great Professor Gregg is their paternal grandfather. . . . You look puzzled. They will probably go in for theology later. They have *not* begun it yet. . . . Then you are going?" Shannon had risen and now developed designs on hat and overcoat.

"Yes, and my thanks for your goodness. You have given me a jolly new kind of afternoon. And now you will surely give me the pleasure of restoring you to your father's house?"

"Thanks, no. I shall telephone up to the house that I am here for the evening. I often do. You look surprised. Don't they know in Melrose that women are emancipated?"

Shannon bowed with a touch of the formality with which they had dispensed during the last hour or two, then took his leave, consulting his watch as he crossed to the elevator. It was eight o'clock, time already to report to Dr. Gregg for the night's work. As he stood waiting a moment a fashionably dressed woman, just released from the elevator on its upward journey, passed him and opened without knocking the door of the club rooms. This, as it happened, she left half open. Shannon heard her voice, high but musical, exclaim:

"Are my lambs here? Of course they are! I always know if they stray . . ." upon this the door

was closed. Shannon decided not to wait for the elevator's return and took the four flights of stairs to the street with a series of flying leaps.

Later he became familiar with the fact that Mrs. Hugh Gregg carried on, on her own account, and for her own pleasure and profit, the work of an Interior Decorator on exclusive and artistic lines. Also, that for purposes of this business she rented and occasionally could be found in an atelier in this same building.

IV

SEVENTEEN LOCUST STREET

AT six o'clock on that same evening Mrs. Douglas Gregg was wheeled into the dining-room of the drab-coloured house on Locust Street by the family servant, Kate Quinlan, who had supported her in the great adventure of descending the stairs from her chamber. Despite the fact of almost lifelong invalidism Mrs. Gregg's face was fair and unlined as the face of a child. Her dark eyes were merry; certain delightful dimples about her mouth as they came and went made a pleasant appeal. Her hands were white and smooth, and her round figure, gowned in purple silk, was altogether pleasing. But as she sat in her wheeled chair Mrs. Gregg was now considering the table before her with a serious and appraising eye. There was the gleaming damask cloth which she recognized as her best, accordingly correct for the occasion. There was the treasured set of old Wedgewood china also; and Kate had not forgotten to bring down the vase of enormous pink roses which had come in the morning from the florist's with a card inscribed "With Hugh's and Lydia's love." Beside her husband's plate lay, as directed, the treatise on New Testament Sociology, long since ordered for him and kept hidden in her own desk. This reminded her of something not in evidence.

"Kate!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Mrs. Gregg." The maid was elderly, angular, drab-coloured like the house, but the eyes of her were unto the hand of her mistress unmistakably.

"Have you remembered Mr. Gregg's present to me?"

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Gregg. It is right here," and Kate laid her hand on a flat box on the sideboard. "Shall I bring in the supper now? I hear the Doctor coming."

As she spoke Professor Gregg entered the dining-room, crossed to his wife's side, gave her a kiss, exclaimed at the pleasure of her appearance down-stairs and attempted to adjust the clumsy chair. Then, for the first time he became aware of the gala aspect of the table. At the same moment Kate appeared bearing a lordly dish of fried chicken, a flush of triumph on her face.

"Why, what is all this about, Rose?" he questioned, perplexity on his face.

"Our day, love! December fifth! You've gone and forgotten again! But never mind. Do sit down while the chicken is hot, and be sorry afterwards. And not too sorry either!" This with a smile across the table as she bent her head for the blessing.

"But where—but what—oh, Rose! I'm afraid I haven't any present for you," murmured the Professor, as he raised his head. "How ever have you stood such an absent-minded beggar all these years?"

"Cease to mourn. You attended to that all right two weeks ago, Douglas. Why should you remember?

Something perfectly lovely I know is in that box over there. Katie has had a hard time keeping it hidden from my insatiable curiosity. Do bring it to me now. I can't wait another minute!" and she nodded with spontaneous gaiety to Kate who at once placed the box in Dr. Gregg's hand. With lifted eyebrows and a humorous pursing of the lips he gazed upon its contents.

"You can hardly be more surprised, my dear Mrs. Gregg, than I am as I present you with this—article," he commented. "What is it, Katie? I take it to be a 'tidy.'"

"If you please, Dr. Gregg, it is a lace collar, and perhaps it would do to put it on right away—to celebrate."

"Exactly my idea," responded the master of the house. In another moment the invalid was adorned with the really beautiful lace, fastened with roses from the bowl on the table. All was accomplished with delicate dexterity by the slender, blue-veined hands of the old scholar. When done he saluted his wife as his bride, ruler of his house and of his heart, lo, these six-and-forty years! The last point was confirmed by a questioning glance at Kate and an answering nod, gaily observed by Mrs. Gregg.

"'My love looks like a girl to-night,'" Douglas Gregg remarked, fixing his gravely smiling regard upon his wife's face, his seat opposite her resumed.

"'But she is old,'" was the quick response, pronounced with a faint echo of the passion and pathos which welled up irresistibly in both their hearts at that

moment. "Now we must cut out all this youthful nonsense and eat our supper. It looks to me as if Katie had surpassed herself."

Unshed tears were in the eyes of both as they turned to the simplicities of their anniversary feast, for the question could not be escaped, Would there be more days like this? Would there be even one?

The supper over, a Bible was brought to the Professor by Kate who, with obviously reddened eyes and nose, took her seat in a straight chair very near the door leading to the kitchen, thus indicating her sense of her own place. The master of the house pushed his armchair away from the table and began turning over the leaves of the book, vaguely seeking for an appropriate passage. His wife broke in with her whimsical laugh.

"Now, Douglas, please remember the Saturday night cotter, and 'wale a portion with judicious care.' *Don't* read an imprecatory psalm as you did on our anniversary last year. I like John's Gospel myself, whoever wrote it."

His eyes flashed their smile to hers. A moment later he began reading the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel. Of this he read twenty-five verses, then kneeling he offered a simple prayer of praise for the past and trust for the future.

Hardly had he risen from his knees when the sound of the door-bell was heard. Kate hastened from the room, and after wheeling his wife into the adjoining parlour—for the Greggs' house was constructed before living-rooms came in fashion and had suffered no

change—he left her for the study to which he was called.

"Who was it, Katie?" asked her mistress.

"A young gentleman, one of the students, ma'am. He gave his name as Graves. A Junior I should take him to be since I never set eyes on him before. The Doctor told me he was like to have a call by appointment the minute supper was over."

"I hope the man won't stay very long—not to-night, you know, Katie."

Mrs. Gregg had hardly spoken before a spasm of pain passing over her face gave warning that it was time for the return to her own room. With practised motions Kate assisted her to mount the stairs, then spent half an hour in minute preparations for the night's rest. This accomplished, leaving Mrs. Gregg merry and cosey in bed, Kate hurried down to her work in the kitchen.

Just before eight o'clock the door of the study opened and Dr. Gregg ushered his departing visitor into the hall. The young man's face was curiously sullen, his movements abrupt and uncertain as if he were dazed by physical pain.

"Above all, my dear Graves," the Professor was saying on a peculiarly quiet and kindly note, "remember what I observed just now. We all go through experiences like this. They pass and we do not find that we are undone, or our life purposes revolutionized. Adjustment to these conditions is apt to be a painful process to a thinking man, but it belongs to the period of development which we have reached."

"Yes," muttered the student harshly, "but if adjustment means compromise—deadly compromise ——" he broke off.

"Ah, you are carrying things to extremes," interposed Gregg. "Compromise is not in question. What strikes you as such is in reality the intellectual inconvenience of adjusting one's self to a broad horizon after having one's life bounded by a narrow arc,—comparatively so, I mean."

"May I ask where Foreign Missions come in, or rather where they come out?" returned Graves, something approaching a sneer on his lip.

"Foreign Missions, truly conceived, suffer in no way by the wider view," was Gregg's somewhat stern reply. "Truth can never suffer from truth, Mr. Graves."

"Oh, I perceive!" Graves spoke with a touch of sarcasm. They had now reached the outer door, but, as he laid his hand on the latch, the door was opened from without. Hardy Shannon came in. Hasty greetings were exchanged, then the door closed on Graves. Shannon proceeded to remove his overcoat which, as one familiar with the house, he hung on the old-fashioned mahogany rack with pegs and small oval mirror, standing by the parlour door.

Into this room Dr. Gregg drew his acting secretary, giving for reason that it was a *festa* and they must not be in a hurry to go to work. A certain camaraderie was at once perceptible between professor and student as they sat down together, camaraderie strong enough to survive the cold comfort of the room, expressionless because so little used, also because of the presentation

silver on the mantel, the austerity of haircloth-covered furniture, closed fireplace and cold hearth.

As Hardy Shannon started to offer his congratulations another invasion of 17 Locust Street was effected, this time a lively and chattering invasion. For in poured, rather than walked, the Gregg twins, Walter and Dorothy, bearing gifts for their grandparents. At once they launched into eager, emphatic explanations of the reasons why their parents could not possibly come to bring their own greetings.

They were youngsters of sixteen, dark-haired, bright-eyed; the boy tall and graceful, the girl daintily pretty. Both were amazingly sure of themselves, full of effervescent and almost bewildering enthusiasm for all which appertained to their ancestors.

Dorothy, generally known as Dame, after the froth of this enthusiasm had blown off, settled herself to a miniature flirtation with Shannon, while her brother engaged Professor Gregg in discussion of the war. A sortie to the second story to visit Mrs. Gregg was shortly effected, after which the young visitors took their leave, sorely, it seemed, against their will, Dame declaring she " just wished they could spend the whole evening there, it was so lovely and restful."

Once outside and the door closed upon them, she took her brother's hand, remarking:

" We pulled that off pretty well, I think myself. Now let's scoot back to the club and have a little fun."

" What did you make of the theologue? " her brother asked. " Good-looking chap, what? "

" Oh, he can have me! He is a thoroughbred all

right. Nancy had him in tow to-night, don't you know? If I had dared I should have told him it was we who made that coffee for him. If he only keeps on coming to the Mortals I shall get him to let me teach him to dance."

Laughing they ran on down the street.

The two men left behind had a sensation as if silence "like a poultice" had fallen to "heal the wounds of sound." Professor Gregg looked dizzy. As for Shannon, realizing by this time that the twins were identical with the figures which he had vaguely and from a distance observed earlier in the evening, he still found himself unable to shake off the impression that they were marionettes,—neat, mechanical figures pulled by rather obvious strings. Certainly something ephemeral, futile seemed to belong to them. Pausing before the parlour door the Professor consulted his watch, then with finality exclaimed:

"Come, Shannon, let us retreat to the citadel and let the portcullis fall. I think we are safe now."

He led the way to the study where was a dying hearth fire. Soon flames were roaring up chimney and two shabby but comfortable easy chairs were drawn up.

"Let the typewriter have a rest for to-night," said the Professor. "We have had sound and fury enough. I want a little silence and a chance to talk with you."

Hardy Shannon responded with a look which said plainly, "I am honoured; I am fortunate; also I am mighty glad to-night to loaf instead of to work."

It was a rare honour for a Seminary student, above all for a Junior, to be challenged to an hour of personal intercourse with Douglas Gregg. The youth felt this and keenly.

For this elderly scholar and gentleman, Christian minister and teacher, had held for many years a position of unique and potent influence in the religious world. Not only within his own denominational limit, but among men of most varying creeds and positions, his name had become an authority. What was more, to a far larger degree than was as yet recognized, he had moulded the thinking of the rising generation. If primarily exerted within the ranks of the ministry his influence was felt in increasing measure among the laity.

It had been something of an event when Hardy Shannon could write to his father and mother that Douglas Gregg had chosen him to help him in the work of copying and preparing for the press the latest, and perhaps the last, of the series of his books. But what this privilege was to bring in its train was beyond their purview or his. This much was obvious and welcome:—a relation bordering on intellectual and personal friendship already existed between the famous scholar and the youthful student.

As he looked across at the older man, sitting relaxed and silent by the fireside, Hardy Shannon was pierced by a sudden perception of his peculiar loneliness. The visit of his only son's only son and daughter had perceptibly served to strike this note.

"I have really had no chance, sir," he said with

sudden access of diffidence, "to express my congratulations on this great day for you and Mrs. Gregg."

"Yes, a great day, indeed," the Professor replied musingly. "My marriage day brought me the chief blessing of my life,

> "'—the flower of Peace,
> The Rose that cannot wither,
> My fortress and my ease.'"

He quoted the lines with a tender smile in his own liberty. "Don't make a mistake when you choose a girl for your wife, Shannon, for she will hold your future in her hands far more than you ever can hold hers."

Shannon did not reply. Before he could construct an answer sufficiently impersonal to suit him on a theme so personal Gregg had taken another line.

"You know Graves, the fellow you met here as you came in this evening? He is in your class."

"Yes, I know him slightly. I am almost too busy to know any of the fellows as much as I want to."

"Yes, I am afraid you are too busy since Chance and I both got after you. About Graves. He is having an awful time,—a perfectly awful time."

"What about?"

"Oh, the Virgin Birth, the nature of Christ, the origins of Old Testament religion, the authorship of the books, what he is to do with Moses, how many Isaiahs there were,—all the usual symptoms. The entering class has an epidemic of this distemper every year at about this time."

"I know," Shannon rejoined soberly, "that some of the fellows get awfully worried."

"Of course they do. And it is quite possible that Graves takes the results of modern scholarship a little harder because of his missionary purpose. I have noticed this before in one or two cases. But it is a passing phase. Candid students become reconciled to the necessary changes of attitude in due time. We are sending out some fine fellows to the foreign field. Did you ever happen to know Dalrymple? or know of him?"

"I have heard my father speak of him favourably. I know he considers him among the ablest men our Board has sent out."

A quiet smile of gratification could be seen on the old Professor's face.

"Oh, yes, Tom Dalrymple was, in many respects, the strongest man we have graduated in ten years. It was about seven years ago that he went to India. He is a Modernist in the best sense. A thorough and fearless scholar."

"He is doing good work out there?"

"Admirable. We get the best reports. His is a case in point. But the average Junior can't grasp it at first. You see, these men come to the Seminary almost from their mother's knee, and when they meet the results of scientific study of the Christian system, why, they are up against it, and pretty seriously so, too, sometimes. How is it you never seem to get worried, Shannon? I am rather disappointed in you."

"You expected me to be a bad case, did you, sir?"

"Well, yes, considering probabilities of your bringing up. Your father is counted rather conservative."

"'Rather' is not too strong. The winds even of heaven must not visit my father's orthodoxy too roughly. We would no more speak of any result of Biblical criticism in his presence than we would swear. Simply, it is not done."

"Yes, I can imagine that it would be like that. There are not many men of his stripe left now, but a few of our best and most effective pastors, I know, regard silent ignoring of the present movement as the only way to frown it down."

"It was a difficult thing, sir, for my mother and me to persuade my father to let me come to Peterboro for my divinity course."

"Your mother?" Gregg repeated with surprise. "Then she does not follow your father entirely? She is not alarmed by the search for truth?"

"My mother has always been in the way of thinking for herself," Shannon replied quietly. "She does so in matters of religion, but she does it in a way to alarm nobody, not even herself. And, as you were saying of the fellows, it is from my mother's knee that I have come."

There was a little pause in their talk. Gregg's eyes were drawn narrowly as if he were seeking to summon back something long forgotten.

"I have a vague remembrance of your mother—as a girl—Shannon," he commented slowly. "I saw her once in Melrose, at the parsonage, long ago. Not many years, I should think, after her marriage. And

she had eyes like yours,—the expression was the same."

In the silence which followed the eyes of the old man scanned the face of the youth with sober, measuring scrutiny.

"What if ——" here he broke off; then, taking up the word again with sudden decisiveness, "what if you, Hardy Shannon, were to be the man to follow me here in the Seminary,—a man like-minded with myself,—one whom I could, in a way, train to take up the work and carry it on in the same spirit, towards the same end?"

"If you knew me better, sir, I fear you would not do me the honour to think of me in such a connection." Hardy Shannon hesitated long before replying and his voice trembled perceptibly when he spoke. Was not this his great moment?

"Ah! you have then perhaps a dark past?" Douglas Gregg laughed lightly. "You do not look it. Do you think it would be safe for me to listen to the story of it? I have experience as Father Confessor. Go on."

They both laughed then. The tension was broken. The Professor rose, put another stick on the fire, then leaning back in his armchair, putting his finger tips together, he remarked, with ironic emphasis:

"Now we are ready for the worst."

V

HARDY SHANNON ENTERS THE LISTS

"THERE'S little to relate," remarked Hardy Shannon, by no means at ease. Douglas Gregg's eyes, fixed upon him, demolished every last defence of evasion or withholding.

Such an interview as the present one threatened to be was the very last thing Hardy would have sought. He wanted for the present to keep his own counsel, but stark sincerity was compulsory, not elective under this man, as also in face of his challenge. Gregg, smiling slightly, remarked:

"This is not a case of a pistol at your head, Shannon, and a demand upon your soul to stand and deliver on pain of death. We might, you know, talk about Gallipoli."

"I don't know but you will feel like falling back on the pistol, after all, Professor Gregg, when I disclose the depths of my duplicity," Hardy returned. "But, anyway, since you have been so good to me, since I have come into your house on this footing, since you have given me the privilege of entering into your own work I have often wished you knew just what is in the back of my mind. In fact, the reason why I came to Peterboro."

"I don't know that I can stand much more

suspense," was Gregg's comment. "Go on. I took you for an honest-to-goodness theological student."

"That is what I am, sir," replied Hardy quickly, "but there are reasons why I am not quite as 'worried,' you know, as many of them are. Do you remember my brother, Park Shannon? He was here in the Seminary for a year about six years ago."

"Yes, I remember him. He went to Germany to study." A shading of coldness was perceptible in Gregg's tone.

"Yes. After spending a year here he decided that he did not want to preach but to fit himself to teach along some line of theology. For that he was convinced he must go, as he said, to the 'sources' of Biblical scholarship. These were to be found in Germany."

"He has been there long enough now to be ready to take up work, I should think."

"Yes. It is disappointing to us all that he does not seem ready to return and look for a job here at home. He seems to be wedded to all things German, especially German Philosophy. He is working on his thesis now and in the meantime has a very fair position in Berlin as secretary to Professor Lechler."

"Ah, indeed?" Gregg raised his eyebrows with quickened question and interest.

"My father is disturbed, I think, at Park's position, especially so as to his future. But he almost never alludes to these things. Park has always gone his own way. And now since the war is on we scarcely ever hear from him. His letters are censored or kept back

if he writes, but we fear he is pretty well pro-Germanized. This is tough for us all. But it has nothing to do with what we are talking about."

"You mentioned your brother's association with Herman Lechler."

"Oh, yes. Before the war I think my father had a certain pride in that, but now I am sure he has become very uneasy. He has learned more of what Lechler stands for—what Germany stands for."

"He would be disturbed."

"But my father only surmises what my mother sees distinctly. Park used before the war to write confidentially to her once in a while, letters which were not for my father to read. He had really swung, back in those days, a long way from the old moorings. Where he is intellectually, even where he is actually now, we don't know. I never understood this change in his views until last Spring."

Here Hardy broke off, smitten with hesitation in embarking upon his own story.

"I am interested. Please take that for granted," commented the Professor.

"Well, you see, sir, I was fitting myself to be an hydraulic engineer, studying at Stevens. I entered in 1913, a year before the war broke out. I never thought of going into the ministry until I was about half through my third year. Then I saw that things were going the wrong way. . . ." Hardy paused again.

"What happened?" the Professor prompted, seeing him again beset by his dread of talking too

much. "You decided then to study for the ministry?"

"Well, sir, not right off. It wasn't exactly simple, you know. What I did was this;—when I went home last Easter I told my mother how things were working in my mind. I usually talk everything over with her first. I thought one thing was sure:—she would be gratified to know that I was considering the ministry, would be all for it, you know. Instead of that she seemed very grave, even rather troubled. It was then that she told me much more than I had ever guessed about Park. The amount of it is that he has discarded Christianity for a form of philosophy which reduces religion to a biological product. He can never in the world serve in the Christian ministry, in any capacity, I should think. You can see how my mother might feel about having another son . . ." here Hardy hesitated.

"About having another son start in to prepare for the ministry and perhaps also throw it over? Yes, I appreciate the situation. And yet, you are here! This grows interesting."

"I am glad you think so, sir, for now I am coming to the awkward part of the story. To begin with, my mother is a rather wonderful woman in some ways, Professor Gregg. While the Modernist criticism of the Bible, and all the changes which are coming with it, are never discussed in our family because the subject is offensive to my father, she has quietly gone on reading and thinking for herself. Her idea is that an ignorant faith is a weak faith. And this is what she

said to me then: 'Don't go in for preparation for the ministry with your eyes shut. Park did. You see how he is coming out. For myself, I know, of course, but little of the new radical tendencies, but thus far my faith is not shaken. I cannot tell what might happen if I knew more. It looks as if the new school moves towards leaving us without the Gospel, without Christ, without light save the light of human reason. It seems to bid fair to become a bridge from faith to agnosticism. Let us look into this matter together, fearlessly, honestly. Let us face the facts. If your faith cannot stand against them, go on with your engineering. But above all things do not try to preach unless you have a sure message, a positive one.'"

There was silence for a little space then, but a glance from Gregg's eyes challenged the student to proceed with the narration of his experience.

"Well, sir, that is what we have done. We have looked into the matter, my mother and I together.—We got the books we needed, some old, some the newest authorities, books which opened up the subject of modern criticism and its effect upon the integrity of the Bible. We studied hard, though, of course, crudely enough. After my return to Stevens I was still often at home for week-ends and, together or apart, we kept up our work. Then through the summer we had our best chance of all. We have made the best use of it we knew how."

"And you are both alive to tell the story?"

The question had a touch of cynical coldness. Hardy Shannon flushed.

"All I can say, sir, is that we have not been overcome so far. Neither of us has lost faith in the Bible as Divine Revelation. I do not suppose that we have gone very far or very deep—that would be impossible, not being scholars. But some things are clear to us both, and I believe will never be obscured."

"Most important, certainly," Gregg remarked meditatively. "And these things?"

The sense of an underlying irony in the Professor's attitude towards his explanation acted as a spur upon Hardy's courage and quickened his reluctance to speak into sudden resolution.

"Am I at liberty to speak as I really feel?" He asked the question almost curtly. "It is not exactly what one would choose,—for a fellow like me to venture to call any position of yours, sir, in question," he added.

"By all means do me the favour of speaking what is in your thoughts, without disguise or modification. Otherwise what you say is destitute of significance. I am listening, believe me, with respect, with sympathy."

There was a tense silence for a moment. Then Hardy spoke, slowly, seriously.

"We have been taught, Professor Gregg, from our childhood, all of us, that God in sundry times and in divers manners has spoken to the fathers by the prophets, and in later days has spoken unto us by His Son. The school of Higher Criticism just now dominant declares, I find, that God has never spoken either by the prophets or by His Son, if by that is

meant speaking by immediate divine and authoritative impartation or inspiration. The Old Testament seems now to be reduced to a body of interesting legends concerning a primitive race with a primitive religion largely derived from the religions of surrounding peoples and tribes. Am I right so far?"

"Wrong, if you deduce anything derogatory to the value of the Christian religion at this point. But pray go on," was the brief response.

"Religion, by and large, is reduced to a purely subjective thing, developed by purely human influences," proceeded Hardy. "*God has not spoken.* That seems to be the cardinal point. The New Testament, after going through the same chemical laboratory processes as the Old, comes out in much the same shape. All the great passages, all the great climaxes, and everything which attributes divinity to Jesus are described as 'spurious' by the new school.

"Now, sir, if I have so far stated what I have found fairly, I am ready to go on and be so bold as to say that I have discovered for myself that the *actual documentary findings* of the School now dominant in Europe and largely so here, are negligible, so far as concerns disparities in language, dates and facts *unalterably established.* The work accomplished along this line is of intense interest and importance even to me, but it gives no ground for essential change in point of view from that which has been held by thoughtful students of the Bible for generations. The accusation, for instance, that believers take the book of Genesis as a biological manual and all that sort

of thing is sheer rubbish. I never knew any one who did, myself.

"Of course, the next question would be, if what I have just said is correct, Why then have the Higher Critics stirred up such a mighty commotion? For it has been said lately, and it seems to me with reason, that a totally diverse type of religion, frankly antagonistic to the great redemptive Christian Faith, is now in process of consolidation as a result of their teaching. Is that a fair statement?"

The Professor did not reply at once.

"It is possible. It must needs be that changes come in this field as in all others. I have nothing to say on the point at present. What is your answer to the question you just raised?"

"The destructive work of the Higher Criticism," proceeded Hardy, "for I suppose it cannot be denied that thus far its work has been quite largely destructive, does not, as I see it, Professor Gregg, spring from inherent defects discovered in the Bible so much as from the *idée fixe* with which the Critics start out. Which is briefly: *'I am a man; whatever purports to be supernatural is alien to me.'* Reason and human experience are taken as the sole accredited guides. Certain men, as I have learned, destitute of personal religion, even of decent reverence, sounded the rallying cry, *'So soon as we allow the supernatural or immediate revelation to intervene in even one single point'*—etc., etc., the case is lost. . . . Wellhausen and his followers, at the start, rule out all possibility of the supernatural. Is it not so? 'If Luke's text

seems to give Christ divinity, then that particular text is not a true one' seems to be the authorized position."

"Then you accept the supernatural as authentic and trustworthy, do you, Shannon?"

"Yes, sir. It seems to me of the very essence of religion, that it should transcend the tests of naturalism. What is the energy of religion, if it is not faith?"

There was no reply. Presently Hardy took up the word again.

"No, Professor Gregg, much as I respect the efforts of the Higher Critics, serious and sincere, I am sure, I cannot accept their conclusions. For one reason, I find that they by no means agree together. The theory which is hailed as final in one decade is repudiated in the following. Facts such as this strike one, you know, —that Erdman, Kuenen's pupil and successor, led reaction against him, declaring, *'Higher Criticism is wrong from the outset.'* I believe Gunkel stands rather high among the highest of Higher Critics. I can't quote him offhand, but I remember his statement of a conviction that the reigning school of literary criticism is all too zealous to explain as not genuine the passages which do not precisely fit in with its construction of history."

"Yes, Gunkel has said just about that. And it is perfectly true. You have struck the weak point, no doubt of that."

Humbled instantly by this unexpected admission, Hardy fell silent, wondering if by his boldness he had

completely alienated his august companion. It was Gregg who spoke next.

"Well, what are you going to do about it, young man?" he asked.

"I mean to fight," was Hardy's answer, "if I can ever find the way to fight to any purpose."

"You do?" Hardy noted a curious steely light in Gregg's glance, and reflected that the old scholar might be sharpening his sword against his crude presumption. Still his answer came undaunted.

"That is what I am here for, sir."

"Would you mind explaining? Just a little?"

"Oh, yes, I mind it most awfully," answered Hardy with a short laugh. "We have got to the crux of the thing now and I hate it. My preamble is over at last. I know it has been a fearful bore . . . for you, sir."

"Not at all. The point of view is naturally somewhat familiar, but I always find it interesting. You would not perhaps entirely exclude from your scheme of things the search after the basis of truth in the Scriptures?"

The question, sarcastic, mocking even as was its implication, seemed after all sincere and simple as the eyes of teacher and student met in frank encounter. If Gregg's sword was drawn its point was not yet lifted.

"I can at least say in my own defence," Hardy began, "that you drew me on to make a Prating Prig of myself in your presence. I am sure, sir, you will take your share of responsibility. I am most interested and eager to gain the results of the best scholar-

ship. But this is precisely because I am convinced that a tremendous reaction from the thrall of Ultra-Modernism must be at hand. At least it is my hope that I may help in some way however small to bring such a reaction to pass. To do that, one should be able to estimate impartially, if that is possible, the forces at work towards the present overthrow of faith. That is why I came to Peterboro, you, Professor Gregg, the highest critical authority in the country, being here."

"To find the weak points in our armour, eh, and know where to strike?" Gregg queried. His smile was sardonic but Hardy Shannon felt a sudden sense of release. His nervous tension relaxed, he settled back into his chair.

"No, sir. Not so much the weak points as the strong," he said and laughed, struck by the humour of the situation.

Douglas Gregg liked the boy's laugh. It rang humorous, human. He liked his unstudied frankness and his fearlessness, destitute of bravado. He looked upon him as he would have looked upon an artless child and, looking upon him thus, he loved him. Such stern youthful convictions amused while they touched him, touched him, for some reason acutely. He had met like convictions often enough. They seldom failed to yield to the inevitable. Yet—after all,—what if this man were cast in a different mould? What if the time should be at hand for the pendulum to swing the other way?

A mysterious nostalgia crept into the old scholar's heart. This young champion stood at the beginning

of the race. He at the end. This other man was to fight for an affirmation. He himself had waged his life's battle for a negation.

"You know, Shannon," he said, almost pensively the other fancied, "a man does sometimes find reason to change his point of view even after the mature age of—twenty-two, is it?"

Hardy confessed the humbling impeachment, then, with boyish eagerness, asked:

"Yes, but does he, sir, when it has to do with the 'master light of all his seeing'?"

"Perhaps—even then."

Gregg's thought had gone back to himself at twenty-two . . . before he had visited Germany.

VI

A MAN'S JOB

"REACTIONARY, eh?" mused Douglas Gregg, regarding Hardy with a careful, considering eye. "Coming to Peterboro to get ready to fight the spirit of the age? You will have your hands full. Sorry for you, my boy, but I like your grit. Go ahead! I will see that you get what you want, since you have joined the ranks of the enemy. Hitherto we have restrained ourselves! I have fed you with milk, to use Paul's words, and not with meat. We will see what you are able to bear." Then, with a change of tone, "It will do you no harm, Shannon, to begin with the mental attitude you have described. It is a gallant one. If you find it by and by untenable it will be because of wider views and more serious study. There will be some painful experiences, no doubt. Nothing is harder in the realm of the spirit than the reconstruction of a man's religious position, but, being honest yourself, I know you understand that there can be no compromise with truth. Perpetuation of the past, loyalty to tradition, these are minor considerations to the scholar. The logic of facts can never hurt us in the end, however painful when first encountered."

"Are 'facts' the only truth?" Shannon asked very soberly.

"Absolutely!"

This word, spoken in a strong, aggressive voice, not heard before, startled the two men. Looking up they saw standing in the door leading from the study into the hall a man of vigorous figure and presence. It was Dr. Hugh Gregg.

"Hello, Father! Hello, Shannon!" he hailed them.

The clock on the mantel struck twelve. Professor Gregg held out his hand to his son and motioned him to a chair.

"You come like a thief in the night, Hugh," he said impassively.

"To be sure. Else what's the use of my latch-key? I can't sit down. How are you, Father? How is Mother? I hope you had a good time celebrating the day. I only got in town half an hour ago. Have been operating in Kendall. Lyde came over?"

"No, the twins came, bringing gifts. Lydia sent your mother some beautiful roses. We had them on the table to-night."

"Why didn't Lyde come?" questioned Dr. Gregg, frowning. "She promised me to."

"The children said she was *very, very busy,*" commented his father with slow, ironic emphasis.

Hardy Shannon had risen to go and by this time was slipping into his overcoat. Dr. Gregg now at his elbow bade him take a seat in his car. "I am going directly past the Seminary," he urged.

As they drove away from the darkened house the Doctor exclaimed with a note of exasperation:

"The logic of facts! I heard what Father was giv-

ing you. The trouble with Father is his infernal inconsistency. Here he has brought me up,—brought Mother up too, as far as that goes,—on his favourite principle of unflinching facing of facts, lead where it may. Does he abide by the principle himself? By no manner of means. He stops just where he wants to,—sticks to the idea of God, immortality,—has rather a leaning, I suspect myself, to the New Testament legends,—all that, and yet talks about never compromising with truth. Now, as I grew up, I took him in earnest and so followed his teaching to its logical result, that being to believe nothing which I cannot demonstrate by natural law. Is he pleased with me because I frankly avow my adherence to the 'logic of facts'? Don't you believe he is. I am his thorn in the flesh," and the Doctor laughed grimly.

Suddenly facing about upon his companion he cried:

"By Jove! I forgot you were a theologue, Shannon. I beg your pardon."

"Beg your father's, if you like," was Hardy's rather brusque response. "You have no need to beg mine."

"I guess that's right, too. Candidates for the ministry now, as I understand it, are given 'judicious latitude' in the interpretation of the creeds. That is judicious, sure enough, else how in this scientific age would the ministry get any candidates? The fact is, Shannon," he added as he drew up and stopped before the low, long brick building with rows of unlighted windows on its low hill, "if you want to get a good church in these days you must beware of being ortho-

dox. It isn't the fashion. I give you that. Look at Parson Chance. He has his ear to the ground. Good-night."

Hardy Shannon hurried through the empty echoing halls of his dormitory, up the bare stairs to his own cubicle and tumbled dizzily into bed. Sleep was slow in coming. He was furiously hungry, nervously overstrained by the long interview with Professor Gregg, bruised by the brief interview with his son. His brain seemed to swing in a mechanical iteration from Gregg the father to Gregg the son. All the while before his closed eyes, as the night wore on to morning, the figures of two marionettes whirled and danced, while their high, light voices persisted in his ears in notes of false emphasis and meaningless cajolery. Suddenly he started up in bed and stared into the dark. What were those idiotic images anyway? Then suddenly his confused impressions cleared. He remembered. Why, of course, the marionettes were Greggs, too! The third generation. A curious come-down, that. There was a gray blur of dawn in his window. Almost time to get up. With which he fell asleep.

"So you're going to cut Primitive Christianity, are you? Do you know what time it is?" The speaker had taken his place at the foot of Shannon's bed. A slender fellow with a twisted knee, the Senior, Barton Conrad.

"Don't know and don't care," was the drowsy reply.

"Well, it's a mere matter of ten o'clock, my lad, whether you will hear or whether you will forbear."

Hardy Shannon sprang to his feet.

"My gracious, Conrad! Ten o'clock, and breakfast gone by the board. I never was so hungry in my life. Haven't had solid food since yesterday noon. I'll have to dash down-town to Walton's or some such place and let Primitive Christianity go."

"You come into my room as soon as you've had your shower and got your clothes on and I will have a cup of coffee ready, an egg and a bun,—all by electricity. Will that do?"

"Do? Rather. I am a starving man."

"How long will it take you?"

"Fifteen minutes."

Over the coffee, served on the student's desk littered with books and papers in Conrad's room, Hardy gave his friend a sketch of his adventures of the previous evening.

"So you, a Junior, dared to beard the lion in his den, old Douglas in his hall? I gaze upon you in wonder."

"He is an old dear," murmured Shannon. "A curious thing, isn't it, how in his private and personal life he can keep that reverent, religious spirit? He does, you know," frowning down the suggestion of Conrad's raised eyebrow and shrugged shoulder.

"That is temperament. Temperament and heredity. Also early training. It may last through one man's life,—hardly more than that."

Hardy, reflecting on Hugh Gregg, went on in silence consuming Conrad's bread and butter. He had not mentioned the Doctor in his recital.

"Besides Gregg deals tenderly with fledglings like you, Shannon," Conrad persisted. "The faculty like to go easy on the Juniors. Prudent and wise, obviously. Wait till middle year! Wait till Gregg opens up Luke's Gospel, for example, cutting out bodily the first two chapters and the last as altogether unhistorical. Then, by rejecting this and that passage as 'lacking confirmatory evidence,' by cancelling every vestige of miracle as legend, and keeping always in mind that the author was sure to misrepresent a lot of things because of his special purpose in writing his book, you shear off a lot more. What remains?"

Conrad had thrown himself back in his desk chair and stared at his friend, his face distorted by suppressed feeling. Hardy Shannon's face reflected the strain in that of his friend.

"You have lost Christmas, see," resumed Conrad, now leaning across the desk and picking up a paper knife with the care of one who acts unconsciously. "You have lost Easter. The Cross? It used to be the supreme symbol of the world's redemption by the sacrificial, voluntary death of the Son of God. Now it merely suggests the untimely cutting short of the career of an earnest but disappointed young enthusiast. That, or something borrowed from Oriental legends. This is the kind of thing Gregg will give you."

"But Conrad, after all, I have heard Gregg speak sympathetically of Delitzsch's pain in witnessing the 'soul-struggles' of new students in his Seminary."

"They may have wounded Delitzsch, but our invincible Gregg regards them as a kind of theological

measles. 'Soul struggles!' I tell you, Hardy Shannon, this Seminary Hill should rightly be called Golgotha. Many a man comes here only to have his spiritual nature crucified and slain."

"Oh, come, Conrad! You are going too far, man. It isn't as bad as all that."

"It is as bad as all that. Look at me! I am nearly through now, and I'm blessed if I know what I am in the ministry for. None of us is going out next Spring with any living faith in the cause to which he has vowed himself. We shall stroll out to earn our living as best we may in that state of life to which it has pleased our early delusions to call us. We shall do it, of course, in as honourable fashion as circumstances permit. But that will not be any too honourable as I look at it. The first thing we shall face will be the potent, grave and reverend Council which shall examine and ordain us. Now if you are in the country, and it is chiefly a country Council, you must be innocent of all knowledge of Radical Criticism or your ordination will be in doubt. But if you are in the city, and especially if you are in a scholastic atmosphere, you must know nothing *but* Radical Criticism. Otherwise prepare to be set down as a hide-bound traditionalist and a back number. A man without a future."

"The times are out of joint for a fact, but I for one thank God for the chance to have my little part in setting them right."

Hardly noticing the interruption Conrad went on passionately:

"Shannon, my poor father and mother saved and scrimped for years for me. I was brought up on a sterile New England farm. Hard work, hard living, small joy there was for us. My parents denied themselves everything to put me through college and seminary and have done it, oh, so gladly, in order that their son might 'preach the Gospel.'" Conrad's voice trembled. "How do you suppose I feel when I go back home bereft of the Gospel and meet the expectant looks in their dear old eyes. They want to hear of my advancing Christian experience, my 'growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord.' Oh, I can tell them the truth and break their hearts all right. It's easy enough in one way. It seems the regular thing nowadays for youngsters to do that sort of thing. But, my God, Shannon, when I think of what it would really mean ——"

"Don't!" cried Hardy, striking the desk with a clenched fist. "You're not to do that thing. You're in a bad dream. Instead of reason having resumed her own throne, reason is trying to usurp the throne of all our being. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh! Men will hear the laughter by and by. Conrad, the whole trouble starts with the radical assumption that there can be nothing super-rational. I tell you, I greet the supernatural with a cheer as the very crown and top of our being! You can do it, too. Higher than reason, stronger than will, the Word Incarnate remains. Supernatural? Why, religion is nothing else!"

"You had better talk to Graves," commented Con-

rad. His head was propped in a weary way on his hand; his forehead gleamed wet with perspiration. He was a delicate, high-strung fellow, capable alike of collapse or of notable achievement. "All I know is that Modernism is in the seats of the mighty now."

"I saw Graves just a moment last night, at Professor Gregg's," responded Shannon.

"He was in here very soon after that, I judge, for he had come direct from 17 Locust Street. He was in a cold fury."

"I saw he was rather stirred. He worked on a New York paper before he came here and means to be a missionary, doesn't he? I never had any talk with him."

"Yes, he came to the Seminary bent on going to the foreign field, and I believe he was in earnest. But last night he declared that, after his interview with Professor Gregg, he had abandoned any such purpose. 'What on earth,' he demanded of me, 'should I sacrifice my country and my career as a journalist for,—the thing I loved to do and could do successfully—in order to go to Africa or China for the sake of an ethical abstraction? At best the Gospel is reduced to a collection of moral precepts.'"

"What is he going to do? Go back to journalism?"

"No. He means now to cut out all Biblical and theological work and fill out his course while he stays in Peterboro with sociology, public ethics and that sort of thing. I don't think he is quite clear as to his future, but, as for the work of a Christian minister or

missionary, he kept repeating, 'It isn't a man's job.' And what could I say?"

"What could you say?" cried Hardy Shannon, now in a white heat of passion himself. "Say it *is* a man's job! Never, since the early Christian centuries, was preaching the Gospel more a man's job than now. And these onslaughts of Radical Criticism have cropped up in one shape or another all the way along. I've got something here I'll read you." Consulting his watch, "Yes, there's just time before I have to make a dash for Jewish Eschatology."

"Oh, that old bore!"

"That bore happens to be new to me. Now brace up and listen to this! I copied it from a book I was reading a few days ago."

Shannon had taken a piece of paper from his pocket. He now read aloud the following:

"At a special conference of Protestant leaders the following declaration of principles was read: 'We have full faith, First, in the supernatural power of God in the government of the world, and especially in the establishment of the Christian religion; Second, in the divine and supernatural inspiration of the Holy Books, as well as in their sovereign authority in religious matters; Third, in the eternal divinity and miraculous birth as well as in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, God-man, Saviour and Redeemer of men.' The man who read these propositions then addressed the Conference with these words: 'Gentlemen, Attacks against the bases of Christianity are seen everywhere, in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, England and

France. *I fear nothing, provided aggression meets with resistance. It is by our faith and labour that the Christian religion must be defended.'* Conrad, my idea is, *Let us resist,* not Let us collapse before aggression. Let us count ourselves Defenders of the Faith. Let it be 'On for the New Crusade.'"

"Who made that declaration?"

"Guess."

"I can't guess. But it is up to date all right."

"Not precisely. It was delivered fifty years ago by M. Guizot in the Conference of the National Protestant Church of France. Now give me your hand, old fellow. Resistance is a man's job. You and I have got to go to it."

"But, Shannon," Conrad spoke with sudden return of energy, "controversy and counter-attacks are going on all the time. They accomplish nothing."

"I know that. There must be a more excellent way. It is for us to find it."

VII

THE MORTALS OFFEND

THE Reverend Whitney Chance's urbanity was in marked abeyance on a certain evening early in February. To be sure, with diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany trembling in the balance, public tension was not unnaturally reflected in the mood of men at home as well as abroad. A man had an excuse if his temper was a bit on edge.

The dinner hour in the Chance household, half-past six, was nearly at hand. Madame Chance sat alone in some state in the drawing-room, a sense of expectancy obviously upon her. Dr. Chance from pacing his study, a room beyond the drawing-room, suddenly appeared between the velvet hangings of the doorway, watch in hand, with the question:

"Can you tell me where Nancy is?"

"She went up-stairs a few minutes ago, Whitney. She had to meet the six o'clock train from New York, you know. Miss Prudhomme came in with her just now and they have gone to dress for dinner."

"You say I know that Nancy had to meet the six o'clock train? I certainly did not know anything of the sort. But I heard somebody come in. Is not Nancy going to the church where she belongs for the Social Centre Banquet to-night?" Dr. Chance's brow

grew darker as he spoke. "You appear to be expecting company, I see. I confess to being puzzled. Who, pray, is Miss Prudhomme? If there is a dinner party here to-night it would seem to me to be in order that I should be informed of the fact."

While he was speaking Dr. Chance's daughter had entered the room dressed in light evening costume, her head held a bit high, a slight smile on her lips.

"Dear Daddy," she began gaily, "you certainly have been awfully shabbily treated, but please remember that when you went out at noon you did not expect to return until after you had married those people out in Magnolia, had been to the church affair and all."

"In short," Chance retorted cynically, "I was thought well out of the way and so you went to work to get up a dinner party instead of going to the church to do there what I depended upon you for. I am not surprised. Not in the least surprised. These things happen so often now ——"

"Father!" Nancy Chance's voice was very low, but a sudden colour flared out in her cheeks. She crossed to where her father stood.

"Please, Father! Some one has just come in, Mary Minot, probably, and I think Mr. Conrad will be here, but it is *not* a dinner party, not in the very least."

"I suppose young Shannon is among your guests?" her father returned.

"No, he is not," Nancy replied. "He is taking your place at the church. I would not even ask him. As far as I am concerned I consider, Father, that I have done my part. I worked down at the church steadily,

directing the folding of bandages, from ten till three today. After that I came back here, and made a gallon of chicken salad with my own hands. I carried the salad to the church and worked there an hour longer setting tables. It seems to me that I am entitled for the evening to keep an engagement elsewhere, especially an engagement made months ago."

Although her tone remained quiet and respectful every line in the girl's face and figure expressed defiance.

Dr. Chance's eyelids flickered.

"May I be so bold as to ask what this engagement is?" he inquired loftily.

"It is the February public meeting of our Club, the one important meeting of the month. And we engaged Miss Prudhomme, a distinguished editor of New York, weeks ago to be present." A close observer would have perceived that although this announcement was made unhesitatingly and with perfect aplomb the speaker's guard was now doubled.

"Aha! the Mortals!" Dr. Chance shrugged his shoulders, turned on his heel and crossed to the fireplace. "All is explained, my dear. Nothing further need be said. All Souls' cannot expect to compete." His lips were drawn in an unpleasant smile, he waved his hands with a light gesture, as one dismissing a subject. But already Nancy had turned to receive her guest of honour who now stood on the threshold. Mary Minot followed by Barton Conrad were in the background.

The startling vision of Miss Prudhomme drove every

trace of cynicism from Dr. Chance's expression and gesture. A smile, welcoming and benign, brightened his eyes and curved his lips as he advanced with winning courtesy to meet his daughter's guest.

The guest was a woman neither young nor old, but of slight, graceful figure, of exquisitely produced complexion, and exquisitely coiffured head. She wore a gown of gauzy white. The bodice of the dress retreated from sight in the back, and, held over the shoulder only by a wisp of lace, displayed in abundant measure the whiteness and delicate curves of breast and shoulder and arms. Miss Prudhomme's modiste had not made the mistake of leaving anything superfluous in her costume.

Nancy Chance, introductions effected and the word given to advance upon the dining-room, noted with mordant sarcasm in her own smile her father's flattering devotion to Miss Prudhomme as he seated her on his right hand at the table. Urbanity was all to the fore again. The day was won plainly enough, but Nancy liked little the flavour of her petty victory.

Mary Minot, on her host's left, found herself, dinner under way, wholly at liberty to respond to the rather eager conversational overtures of Conrad. Miss Prudhomme absorbed Dr. Chance's attention exclusively and quite evidently to their mutual satisfaction, she being greatly struck by his person and manner, he by the discovery that she was connected with the influential and very modern *Free Lance*. Finding that her department on this organ was that of Current Literature, Dr. Chance lost no time in leading Miss Prudhomme to

discuss his chances of recognition should he himself embark on a literary venture.

"The fact is, Miss Prudhomme," he confided with a smile of engaging frankness, "every man wants to write a book,—one book. My only especial excuse for such an ambition is that I have really something to write about."

This, Miss Prudhomme, with a look of flattering absorbedness in what was coming, could not for an instant doubt.

"You see," he went on, "in the twenty-five years in which I have served as a Christian minister, a tremendous change has come over the purpose as well as the practices of my profession."

"How interesting," murmured Miss Prudhomme.

"When I started out the whole animus was individualistic, subjective. It was a man-to-man, or I might even say a soul-to-soul business, for it concerned theoretically the everlasting destiny of each person coming into my purview. To-day the emphasis is transferred from the individual to the community, from the part to the whole. It is upon the Social Gospel."

"I see," breathed Miss Prudhomme who in fact saw nothing.

"Our present outlook is immeasurably broader, as you perceive," continued Dr. Chance impressively. "We no longer stress dogma or the personal element in religion. It is the onward sweep of progress in human society which engages us. Naturally the old-fashioned evangelistic element passes from sight. The Bible, likewise, falls into its proper place, as we grasp

the great truth that revelation is not static, that God speaks in every age in the hearts of men with equal significance. Do you follow?"

"Oh, I think so, Dr. Chance." Miss Prudhomme hastened to collect her widely wandering attention at this unexpected challenge.

"The book which I should like to write, if I could venture to believe there would be a welcome for it, might be entitled '*The Larger Ministry.*'"

"Indeed, Dr. Chance," responded his guest, "such a book as you would write on a theme so vital, I do not hesitate to say, would be sure of a *warm* welcome. Do tell me more of what you have in mind."

Miss Prudhomme's glance aside, as she settled into a listening attitude, conveyed to her the fact that Dr. Chance's daughter sitting by her, and the young man and woman vis-à-vis, were closely engaged in discussion of what seemed to be to them subjects of liveliest interest quite other than the Social Gospel. She would have relished participation in their gay young interchange of wit and repartee. Still she was convinced that her handsome and extremely polished host was the dominant figure in the group. With this she would do well to be satisfied for the moment.

But hardly was the salad course reached when a summons came for Dr. Chance. The car sent to convey him to a wedding in a suburb of the city was at the door.

"And after the marriage I must be in evidence at our church where a social event of great importance in the life of our coöperative development is on,"

commented the clergyman as he rose and made his apologies. "I could have wished," he began, but a glance at Nancy's face with its faintly quizzical expression checked him in revealing even the shadow of a desire to exchange the church appointment for a gathering of the Mortals.

The moment's silence which followed the exit of the head of the family was broken by Miss Prudhomme who, with a faint lifting of her eyebrows and a deprecating smile, exclaimed:

"Oh, I have tried so hard to understand! I wouldn't for anything have Dr. Chance know what a pagan I am! He has been talking to me in the most fascinating way, and I have tried to look wise, but I hadn't the least notion what it all meant. All about the change in the church, in his purposes as a minister, you know. But you see we don't review religious books on the *Free Lance* and I am kept so busy working on general literature that I never have a moment to spend on such subjects myself. And I haven't had time to go to church,—except to a wedding now and then,—in—oh," breaking off with an infectious laugh, "I believe, in this presence, it wouldn't do for me to say in how long. You would send me straight back to New York and I should never meet your Club at all. Which would be a blow!"

"No danger of that, Miss Prudhomme," commented Nancy.

"But the rest of you, for all you prattled at such a rate among yourselves, must have got some sort of idea of what Dr. Chance was discussing. Do explain,

Mr. Conrad, if that is your name. I believe you are a divinity student ——?"

"Correct on both counts. What precisely do you wish me to do?" returned Conrad quietly.

"Do, in just a sentence explain what is this revolution in the church? What? also Why? But mind, only a sentence."

"What you ask being impossible," returned Conrad with a lightness matching her own, "I will prove it by saying most inadequately that just now emphasis is laid in many quarters upon Christianity as less a personal, individual concern than a social, communal matter. Will that do, Miss Minot?" he concluded, turning to meet the grave eyes of the girl at his side.

"What my father really means," put in Nancy, not waiting for Mary Minot to speak, "is, that personal religion being dead, the ministers are trying to bury it as decently as they can with a lot of wreaths woven of social science, civic conscience, all that sort of thing. Very interesting, only, Miss Prudhomme, I am frightfully sorry, but we shall have to take our coffee on the fly or the Mortals will be in despair."

"Is our car waiting?" asked Mrs. Chance.

"Yes. I heard it just now. It will take you to the church first, Grandmother, as soon as you are ready."

Mrs. Chance hurriedly rose from the table, then paused and remarked with tightened lips:

"You see, Miss Prudhomme, there are still a few of us left old-fashioned enough to consider that church obligations hold first place. I wish you good-evening."

The ball of the evening's program at the Mortals' gaily lighted and decorated chambers was set rolling without delay upon the arrival on the scene of the group from the Chance dinner table.

The Gregg twins, clad in the slightest and filmiest of supposedly Greek draperies, ushered in the series of experiments in self-expression by a rhythmic dance, daintily graceful, and dreamily sensuous. Their mother, in a costume which held its own for daring with that of the guest of honour, presided throughout the evening over an enormous punch bowl. The twins, having repeated their dance, an effervescent group flocked about their mother clamouring that she give heed to their ecstasies, also clamouring for punch.

"Yes, Dame and Pyth are dear in that number, aren't they?" Mrs. Gregg could be heard in response. "They really have a lot of that adorable pagan insouciance in their temperament, I think, don't you? Do let me fill your cup. Yes, they are a precious pair of pagans,—perfectly unprincipled rogues, you know! But I rather fancy them that way, myself."

This and much more chatter of the kind was restrained only when the program's continuance demanded attention. For Mrs. Gregg's punch bowl was as inexhaustible as her sallies of capricious humour, and as ready for all who came. And all came and came more than once, save two or three.

Conrad sat with Mary Minot in a far corner.

"Can you tell me what I am here for?" he said to her in an undertone as Nancy Chance prepared to give a violin solo. "This doesn't look like my kind of a

crowd. Perhaps it's fortunate that I have to leave in forty minutes to get a train."

"You are here to express yourself," was Mary's rejoinder. "You know self-expression is what the Mortals exist for,—explicitly, avowedly. Many of us, you see, have no other chance but this. There will be a free-for-all talk after Miss Prudhomme."

"How are you going to express yourself?" he asked. "I fancy it will be less freely than some of our fellow Mortals. I hope you are going to read one of your poems. I never heard but one, you know."

Conrad's glance as he spoke disturbed Mary with recollection of Nancy Chance's casual assurances that he was in love with her.

"Yes, I suppose I shall have to read when Nancy finishes. I promised her I would. But someway to-night I wish I was out of it."

"You would," was the concise reply. But the first notes of the violin came to them seeming to appeal through the vibrant air for stillness. "I should if you were not here."

During the rendition of the violin solo Dr. Hugh Gregg, a rare visitor to the Chambers of the Mortals, strayed in. He seated himself quietly near the door and wore an air calculated to discourage easy approach.

When the music ended, however, he was first to take Nancy by the hand and his smile of approval spoke of a somewhat intimate sympathy between them.

"Very beautiful, very truly given. I came for this," he said rather low. "Thank you, Mischance." Nancy laughed a little as he so called her.

The poem which Mary Minot read, and which Barton Conrad listened to with eager ears, was a minor poem on a minor key, full of fugitive grace. It was vigorously applauded and encored, but Mary persisted in effacing herself as swiftly and noiselessly as possible.

A few more experiments in self-expression by the Mortals themselves were followed by a brief interval in which unquestionably all present were engaged in personally expressing themselves to the top of their bent. Then, suddenly, a few notes struck on the piano brought the company back to their places. In the expectant stillness following, Miss Prudhomme was introduced with flattering protrayal of her conspicuous achievement in the field of literary criticism.

Her attack proved her mastery of her own resources, of her theme, and of her audience. Audacious wit and penetrating, if cynical snap judgment were joined to an apparently limitless familiarity with the general literature of the day. The common run of these books she scourged with biting sarcasm for all-pervading mediocrity. The twofold curse of current literature she described as its superabundance in quantity and its mediocrity in quality. To confine herself to fiction:—never had there been such enormous output; never fiction of such all-pervading banality. She cautioned young writers in the audience to wait long and train themselves with inexorable severity before they ventured to sally forth before the public with their experiments.

"It is not difficult," she proceeded, "just now, to find a publisher even for a poor or a crude book. If

it has certain popular elements and 'plays to the galleries' on the right key any book can get a chance. The publishers will see to it that its wrapper or morning-jacket, so to speak, describes it as epoch-making, the author as headed straight for immortality. They will secure a few press notices to the same effect. Then the book is launched on its brief life,—possibly six or eight weeks at most,—and disappears promptly into the gulf which must be bottomless since the present product of ineptitude never fills it up.

"But in the midst of this noisy torrent of mediocre books,—I am still speaking of fiction in particular," proceeded Miss Prudhomme, "we have a few exceptions, novels whose quality ought to overawe the average writer into silence. Let me mention two outstanding books which in themselves alone redeem our day and our day's standards. The first, *Catherine Conant,* is written by a well-known Englishwoman who has long since thrown aside the shackles of convention. The book pierces to the deep places of the heart, the mainsprings of a woman's soul. It sheds upon the problem of the freedom of the human spirit an incomparable illumination. While it sounds the deeps of passion, shirking nothing, giving full emphasis to the urge of the physical, it is absolutely clean, as it is splendidly courageous. In short it is a masterpiece of art.

"But truer than truth, as has been said, stronger, because serener, than *Catherine Conant,* is Wilmott Hutton's new novel,—I trust every one here has read it,—I speak, of course, of *The Law of Liberty.* One

stands wordless and overcome in the presence of this book. It is beyond our criticism, for its calm scientific temper is capable of regenerating mankind. In it we hear the cosmic laughter of the universe at the imbecilities of Puritanism. It is, I say it boldly, the highest point thus far reached in our generation in English fiction."

Much more of like purport filled out the lines of Miss Prudhomme's performance. It closed amid a furore of excited applause, during which Conrad slipped unnoticed from the room.

VIII

INEXORABLE YOUTH

WHEN the session was opened for discussion of Miss Prudhomme's positions it became evident that some slight exceptions to her strictures on current fiction were taken, particularly by a group of young writers. One of these instanced a novel, not very new, but still in the running, called *The Stars in their Courses,* which he considered by no means mediocre. It was written by Elinor Dane but who "Elinor Dane" was he had no idea. Probably the name was fictitious.

Miss Prudhomme accepted the suggestion of *The Stars in their Courses* as an exception to the common run of novels of the day. It had not occurred to her to mention it because her attention was given to newer books; also because "Elinor Dane" had appeared to be a one-book author.

Another speaker rose then to say that Elinor Dane was not a pseudonym and that, furthermore, she was just now living in Peterboro. The fact was scarcely known because she had come here an invalid, broken down by overwork, had made her home with relatives, and never went out. He agreed cordially with what had been said in praise of her novel.

Mary Minot in her far corner could not see this last speaker but his voice stirred a strange perturba-

tion in her pulses for some reason which she could not define. It was a teasingly familiar voice, and yet, pitched for public utterance, unrecognized. Somewhere she had heard it. Inexplicably it filled her with a wholly unreasonable pleasure to hear it now and here. And she seemed by way of prolonging this sensation, for the unseen speaker was now craving indulgence for more extended speech.

"I am fully in sympathy," he went on, "with Miss Prudhomme's authoritative judgment of current fiction, that is so far as I know it. Also, with what seems fair inference from her estimate of the quantity and quality of it; which is to say that the yearning for self-expression of which we hear much" (here a ripple ran through the ranks of the Mortals) "is possibly hardly entitled to the encouragement which it receives. Is it not possible that no small part of what we exalt and exploit as 'self-expression' is nothing more or less than the eternal ego seeking the goal of admiration?"

In a certain cadence with which this question was uttered Mary Minot suddenly captured the identity of the speaker. It was Hardy Shannon. She had met him but few times for few moments. Vexed with herself she was still unable to quiet the quickening of consciousness which his voice produced in her.

"But if Miss Prudhomme will allow me," he proceeded, "I must venture, very diffidently and with due sense that she possesses, as I do not, the authority of the professional critic, I must make bold, I repeat, to enter a protest against what has impressed me as

undue, even extravagant eulogy of *Catherine Conant* and *The Law of Liberty*. Those novels I have read because of the reputation of their respective authors. I unhesitatingly admit that they stand apart from the common run of fiction of the day by reason of distinction of style and dramatic power. But I consider them all the more for this reason mischievous books.

"Oddly, perhaps, these authors, one a woman, one a man, possessed of different traditions and methods, have chosen the same thesis, for both of these works are problem novels. This thesis in the first place is, to put it baldly, that the Christian religion with its intimations of immortality, of a Creator, and a Redeemer,—the hopes for which and by which men have lived and died for nineteen centuries,—is just now casually discovered to be dead, thrice dead, and by the hands of these prophets it is plucked up by the roots accordingly and cast out as an object of distaste and avoidance for passers-by. Then the thesis, in the second place, contends that morality, and in particular sex morality, as a product of this same obsolete religion, should also be cast into the discard, to be replaced by the law of primitive natural impulse. Repression of these elemental impulses is the high crime against humanity. Of this our forefathers and our lawgivers were verily guilty. The indulgence of them sets high-water mark for both these books. The discarding of fidelity, chastity and honour is held up as the normal, sound and honest attitude. Nothing is wrong that is natural! I must frankly confess that I find here no basis for the 'regeneration of mankind.'

Rather I see the basis for a return to the ethics of the jungle."

As Hardy Shannon ceased speaking the chairman of the gathering wisely declared it adjourned. Thereupon a chaotic, chattering crowd pressed about Miss Prudhomme to deprecate, to sympathize and to burn incense.

With a passing remark to Nancy Chance that she preferred going home alone at once to waiting for her and her motor-car, Mary Minot effected a rapid departure from the chambers and the building.

The night was clear and fine, the sky set thick with the winter stars. As the clean, cold air blew upon her face Mary felt a sense of relief from the heat, the tension and tumult with which the hour had been filled. She was glad that no street-car was waiting on the corner of the Square, glad to stand for a little space alone and silent and let the wind purge her veins of fever. Then, just as the car rattled into sight and stopped at its terminus, some one was at her elbow. It was Hardy Shannon. He assisted her up the high step and to a seat as the car lurched, with the reckless indifference of the midnight manners of its kind, on its last home-run.

Surprised as she was, Mary could not demur at Hardy's request that he might escort her on her way back to the Peyton School. This institution being almost at the opposite end of the car route, she had looked forward with some faint misgiving to the short walk which must follow for her alone at midnight.

"But how did you escape so quickly, Mr. Shan-

non?" she asked as they settled down to the unexpected tête-à-tête. "I thought you would have to wait to be tarred and feathered. And that takes quite a while."

"Oh, not at all," was the laughing response. "Miss Prudhomme asked me for cigarettes to smoke together in token of amicable understanding. Miss Chance told me that she loved a fight and was awfully sorry it didn't go farther. That was enough. Since my peace was made with those two I felt at liberty to clear out."

He did not add that he had seen Mary leave the place and followed on her heels of set purpose.

"Now tell me, please, all you know about Elinor Dane," demanded Mary abruptly. "It is so exciting to hear that she is now in Peterboro. Have you actually seen her?"

"Yes, I have talked with her for half an hour. Do you like her work?"

"Oh, immensely."

"So do I. Compared with those books we were discussing, it is like the sky and the stars to-night after ——"

"After the Mortals in full panoply," interjected Mary. "But you say Elinor Dane is an invalid?"

"Yes. She was a teacher in Revere College, and overworked, adding her writing to all the rest, I suppose. She is confined to her bed, is practically helpless. I wish you would go and see her."

"Would!" exclaimed the girl. "Wouldn't I if I dared? Any one so distinguished as that!—How could I?"

"Let me tell you," and Hardy warmed to his theme. "Miss Dane is quite alone, I judge, except for one sister,—has no home of her own. This sister is a Mrs. Eliot who lives not very far from your school. She happens to be a member of All Souls' but an absentee member, I take it. Anyway Dr. Chance didn't know much about the family,—certainly nothing of Miss Dane's connection with it. He simply gave me Mrs. Eliot's name on a list of families connected with the church which he wished me to call on. I have been there once and was taken up to see Miss Dane. I think I can promise you that you would give her pleasure by a visit. Shall I let her know that you may come? I will send her a line if you let me."

This being satisfactorily arranged they talked casually against the clatter of the nearly empty car until it came to an abrupt stop at the intersection of two lines. The motorman and conductor appeared inside and dropped into seats as if progress were not to be resumed for a time.

"I always have to change here," Mary informed her companion. "But the other car won't come along for six or eight minutes, so that it is better to stay here while we wait. It is a miserable neighborhood,—saloons all about."

"Why don't we walk the rest of the way?" asked Hardy. "Is it too far for you?"

"Oh, no!" cried Mary, suddenly keen. "I always wish I could, but when I am alone ——"

"You naturally don't."

With this Hardy led the way out and in a moment

more they were walking at a good pace through mean streets of a disconsolate suburb, hastening out towards the wide, tree-lined avenue beyond on which the Peyton School was situated.

"Oh, what a rest after that car!" cried Mary, her spirits rising. "I could walk ten miles to-night, with such a sky, such an air."

"Let's do it!" responded Hardy. "It is no night for tamely going home to bed, that's certain."

Mary looked up quickly. Some change in his tone conveyed significance beyond his words. The change she discovered in his face was startling. A new sternness was on it such as she had not known it could wear, something mysteriously formidable. The face just then might have been grim but for a loftiness of look which, as she met his eyes, made her heart leap with intuition of strong passion, how stirred she could not guess.

"You didn't see the little chap selling extras down there at the saloon door where we left the car, did you?" Hardy asked in wholly matter-of-fact fashion.

"No. Is there news?"

"Yes. I saw the headline. Bernstorff is dismissed. Our diplomatic relations with Germany are severed, Miss Minot."

"Does that mean that we enter the war?"

"Undoubtedly. Perhaps not at once. There will have to be more or less gerrymandering with Germany first."

They walked on in silence for a few moments, awed by a sense of imminent issues restraining speech.

"Thank God!"

The words rang out on the night's stillness some moments later from the depths of Hardy Shannon's heart. He had forgotten that he was not alone, but what difference did it make? Then, once more aware of the girl who strode on by his side, with difficulty keeping his unconsciously lengthened pace, he bent over to her and said gently:

"Don't you think we have been patient long enough?"

"I do," Mary replied earnestly. "War to me seems wicked, wholly inexcusable among civilized peoples. But now, when barbarism is trying to crush civilization, what is left but defense?"

"Yes," he said, "I have tried to hold the conscientious non-resistant position as hard as I could, else I should have gone to Canada to enlist before this. But the time for that is over now. But not forever," he added under his breath.

"Then,—if we should declare war,—you would go?"

"Oh, yes. If they will take me. I guess I'm sound of limb and wind." After a pause, "What would you think of me if I didn't?"

"What I never could think—of you," she answered simply. "But I am thinking too of your father and mother," she added timidly. "I have heard you speak of them. It will be hard for them."

"Yes," he said soberly. "Of course a fellow has to think of that. But they would never hold a man back. They are too good sports."

As they walked on Mary felt as if, notwithstanding the outward commonplaces, she had had part in an experience solemn . . . sacramental. Silence was better suited than speech to such a moment. She was glad that she could share in the moment's passion but she trembled. A girl knew better than girls did three years ago what war meant. . . . Then some fresh sense of wholesome, hearty cheer passed from the man's heart to hers. Laughing he remarked casually:

"I believe I got my fighting blood up quite a bit over that ridiculous deliverance we listened to at the Mortals to-night. I don't know that any one there agreed with me. I rather suppose I was looked upon as rushing in where angels would fear to tread, but I'll be hanged if I will 'stand in wordless wonder' at that kind of rot. Think of those young geese all at gaze drinking in those columns of *Free Lance* copy as if it had been a message from Olympus! What did you think of it, Miss Minot? Can you tell me why decent people will rave over such pagan dregs as are served them in *Catherine Conant* and *The Law of Liberty?*"

"Yes," replied Mary promptly, "I think I can. It is simply because it's the fashion. If you want to be considered 'the thing' it has become necessary to burn incense before pagan shrines."

"Cheap incense and cheap shrine, I call it."

"Cheap and poisonous, too. Will you explain to *me*, Mr. Shannon, how it has come about that we have laws insisting that labels with the word *Poison* in large

letters be pasted on every bottle or box containing bodily poisons, but that books overflowing with poison for the mind and morals are allowed to be sent broadcast, not only with no warning label, but with a label of immoderate and urgent recommendation? Publishers of these books actually advertise, 'Hurry! Hurry!' as if every moment were lost before the poison is in your hands."

"Oh, yes," Hardy replied, laughing. "Of course, I can explain that. It is my turn now. It is merely a matter of selling goods. It is commercialism pure and simple. What is decadent is now what is demanded. Censors are ordered off. They interfere with trade. Which must be protected at all costs. It is possible, when you come to think of it, though, that this idea of yours of poison labels on poison books might be well received, as increasing sales."

"Horrible thought! But seriously, it does seem to me that people who wish to steer clear of unclean books have a right to protection."

"I think you are right. There ought to be some way of saving clean-minded people from inadvertently buying dirty books. How would a label or sign like this be?—Say a small triangle, stamped into the cover of every such book, with the scarlet letter enclosed?"

"Yes," said Mary gravely, "that would do. What is more, something will *have* to be done if free lances like Miss Prudhomme are to go on their conquering way urging these books upon girls and boys. Oh, Mr. Shannon, I am so worried about the Mortals! I don't want to go to the meetings any more. I don't like

some of the people who come there. I don't like the things they are going in for."

"That is not surprising. Why should you—you being—you? Why not quit?"

They had reached the school gate over which was suspended a lighted lantern. Its rays fell full on Mary's face. The young man could see how the quick colour sprang to her cheeks as she spoke, but he was not sufficiently merciful to aim his glance elsewhere for that reason. With a little appeal in them she lifted her eyes to his.

"There is Nancy Chance, you see. My dear friend. And such a splendid girl."

"You are afraid it will hurt her, offend her, if you withdraw?"

"Yes, and I think . . . perhaps if I stay in . . . being a school teacher and a bit of a Puritan into the bargain you know . . ."

"Perhaps Miss Chance and the other Mortals might moderate their pace? Yes. There's something in that. I think you *have* a responsibility there. What a pity that Miss Chance,—such a brilliant girl, and such an honest one, too,—should have this queer little twist! I can't describe it or account for it. I don't know her well, but she interests me peculiarly."

"I think no one who knew Nancy at all could help being interested in her," Mary returned, knitting her brows. "The trouble is, I am confident, in great part reaction,—the result of her home life. Mrs. Chance is a fine woman in many ways, but being thoroughly conventional she is constitutionally incapable of under-

standing Nancy or even—well, of wanting to. She has the bent also towards the negative side of every proposition, what I call 'the eternal No,' a little over-developed. And she never goes below the surface of anything."

This was a severe criticism from Mary Minot. Hardy smiled.

"You do not overstate the case. But I should think Dr. Chance's temperament, certainly open to new impressions and generous in indulgence of new viewpoints, would offset any such influence in the life there in their home."

Mary started to reply, then, as she suddenly realized Hardy Shannon's relation to Dr. Chance, the words remained unspoken.

"I must go in," she exclaimed. "This hanging on the gate is not recommended, you know, in a young ladies' boarding-school."

Hardy put his hand on the gate, holding it shut.

"No, please. You cannot go until you let me hear what you started to say. Seriously, it is your duty,—my right. I have something to say on this point."

This sudden masterfulness Mary found hard to gainsay.

"Dr. Chance is very able and I am sure he must do a lot of good. The only trouble is that, whether she is right or not, my poor Nancy does not believe . . . it is hard to say it . . . does not *believe in him.*"

Hardy Shannon grew very grave.

"I am afraid Nancy may be right," he said, the assent plainly coming from some painful conviction of

his own, debated hitherto in silence. "It is a serious thing for a lot of us, if it is true. But for her . . ."

"For her," Mary took up the word with the urgency of a real solicitude, "for her, Mr. Shannon, it goes down to the foundations of things. It means, in its outworking, defiance and cynicism, but more than that, it means danger. Good-night. You cannot come farther. I cannot stay here longer."

Her hand was taken in the clasp of Hardy's and their eyes met, their young faces unsmiling.

"We will do what we can for Nancy Chance, you and I," he said. "That is understood?"

"That is understood," she replied. The gate was held open and she fled up the snowy box-bordered walk to the dark, wide-winged house.

IX

AT THE BREAKING POINT

THE month of March, 1917, throughout the country, was marked by the swift onrush of public feeling to a point of highest tension. Germany's blunt announcement early in the winter that she would sink on sight any vessel whatever, belligerent or neutral, in the waters surrounding Great Britain, France and Italy, had set in motion a mighty wave of indignation on this side the Atlantic. The revelations of the Zimmerman note, that "last surrender of the German national conscience," lashed this wave into a sustained fury bound to find expression by force.

Peterboro, being a University town, was quick to feel the pulses of the national temper. In all departments of the University there was prompt response to the urgency for action. In none, perhaps, was the response keener than among members of the Divinity School.

On a late March morning the city papers displayed headlines showing fresh torpedoing and sinking of Relief ships by German submarines. It was in the stern and ominous temper which this news aroused that a group of a dozen students met during the forenoon in Professor Gregg's classroom. It was the

hour for one of the few of his elective courses open to the Junior class. The course concerned the development of the Hebrew Religion. Hardy Shannon, in his eagerness to come under the instruction of Gregg, whose regular courses were not prescribed until the following year, had joined this group. This morning, silent, almost savage of mood himself, he found it a relief that the men he met on coming into the classroom were no more disposed than himself to wonted social commonplaces.

It was a bare, empty, nondescript room, this classroom of Gregg's in which the small group gathered. The tall, uncurtained windows gave the place full value of stormy March sky and leafless trees in the crude early light. Beyond the rows of student armchairs,—fifty or more of them,—and the low rostrum with its lectern, chair and table of reference books, the room was featureless. Oddly, as his indifferent glance wandered about in search of a *point d'appui,* Hardy perceived for the first time that a picture hung on the green-gray wall at the left of the desk, a faded steel engraving. Rising mechanically from his chair he took a few steps forward, then stood to study the print, being ignorant thus far even of its subject. He made this erratic excursion not because of the slightest curiosity regarding the picture, but because, in his present mood, the inaction of the few moments of delay in the Professor's entrance had become intolerable.

What he found was the semblance of a man of studious aspect seated at a desk, pen in hand, a manu-

script spread before him. The inscription below read, "Herzliche Grüsse von Julius Wellhausen, Greifswald, 1878." Having read this Hardy turned on his heel. As he reached his chair he caught the eye of his classmate Graves who was seated in the row behind him. A fleer of sarcasm was struck out in his look and with the words:

"What else did you expect? Of course it would be some old Teuton tutelary deity!"

Hardy had chosen at random a place near the front row of seats. As the other members of the class came in they had chanced to settle further back in the room in irregular two's and three's. The place was still, Graves's words distinctly audible to every one, or so it seemed.

Quick colour rose to Hardy's cheeks; he dropped into his seat. At that moment Professor Gregg entered the room. As he took his place on the rostrum the men, as was their custom, rose in token of respect. The motion of his hand indicating that they be seated was neither more nor less impassive than usual; the glance over his spectacles, appraising the quota of the class's membership present, was characteristically keen, cold.

And yet, whether it was his imagination or the reflection of the fire in his own soul, Hardy thought he detected an unwonted light in the Professor's eyes as they met his own, a light as of some hidden but mounting flame. Was it the light of conflict? If so, the young man wondered vaguely, what battle would Gregg join on a day like this? He could not guess.

But a sense of something difficult and unwelcome impending seemed to settle down upon the place.

"Gentlemen, you are aware," began Gregg, remaining seated as was his habit and speaking in his wonted low, even tone, "that examinations begin next week. As this class is not subject to examination, we have come to our last session. This being the case, and a crisis on of an importance impossible to exaggerate both for our own nation and for all nations, I have decided to substitute for the routine work of the day a theme of more vital interest at the moment to us all.

"I assume that, despite the tumult of the present hour, you, as Christian men of some maturity of thought, have emerged from boyhood sufficiently to possess the capacity for fair play. Also the ability to exercise justice towards all, malice towards none. I believe, therefore, that I can do you no higher service in this, the last meeting of our group, than to review with you, very briefly and wholly dispassionately, the contribution, I may say the colossal contribution, of the German people to the sum of human knowledge, achievement and progress."

Aghast himself, Hardy Shannon made quick calculation as to the reception likely to be accorded the Professor's purpose. He knew perfectly, however, without calculation, how cold that reception must prove. Nothing remained but to abide the issue.

Gregg, in no way discomfited by the chill which he could not himself have escaped, proceeded to set forth his appreciation of the Germany of the past. Having passed in rapid review her foremost poets, artists,

musicians and statesmen, he called attention to the fact that the Germany represented by these names was, after all, not the Germany in which he and those who had shared in his own line of research and study were most deeply interested. For the Germany they knew best was represented by her apostles and prophets of the new intellectual freedom, of the new spirit of scientific investigation into the sources of the Christian religion.

In this province, the Professor proceeded to declare, the whole theological world was laid under prime obligation to the industry and persistence of German scholars assuredly, but, above all, to their fearless initiative. He then enumerated names of certain leaders along this line,—uncouth names and crabbed they sounded in the ears of those who listened, as Ritschl, Krenkel, Weizsäcker, Holtzmann, Schmiedel, Jülicher, *et al.*

Hardy felt, rather than saw or heard, the growing restlessness. It quivered palpably through the room as Gregg proceeded. But the end was not yet, and of this he was sure. Gregg was "coming down to date, worse luck!" he said to himself.

"The Germany which I have thus far described," the Professor continued, "is not the Germany of to-day. Of that there is no question. Ambition, the sin by which fell angels, has ensnared her. She has caught from England the fever of imperialism, that fever from which even our own country has not escaped. The mighty volume of her recent material progress had revealed what her future progress could

be, were she free to develop along the line of her towering genius. But she saw herself hedged about by sullen and massive antagonisms. She perceived that the time had come when, if she could not rule her rivals, she must be ruled by her rivals. In an evil moment her militaristic forces sprang into power and took the helm of state.

"Gentlemen, do not let the present popular clamour deafen you to the appeal of reason. Militarism in Germany is blood-brother to the militarism which, this very day, is stirring among us here in the United States. Remember that nothing can be predicated of Germany which might not with equal justice be attributed to any member of the family of civilized nations. . . ."

A sudden noise and movement behind him drew Hardy's attention. Graves had risen and now strode with heavy steps towards the classroom door, his head held high, a touch of melodrama wholly detestable, thought Hardy. But then he saw, to his dismay, a thing which after all he seemed to find inevitable, that Graves was followed by Allerton, a gentlemanly fellow of English parentage, his face pale and set.

Hardy did not look aside again. He did not care to see what he could hear plainly enough: one man following another in grim file, moved as if irresistibly by an impulse of protest. Despite his own sense of fierce revolt from Gregg's statements, Hardy could not accept this means for its expression. He kept his eyes fixed now on the face of the Professor who, while his dicta were thus set at naught by his disciples, continued his discourse without shadow of turning.

Hardy thought he could detect a grayish pallor which, however, spread so gradually over Gregg's face as to be doubtfully discernible. Further nothing. How many men were left in the room now? he wondered. Nothing would have induced him to turn his head. Then, suddenly with an ironic smile, Gregg broke off and with a gesture as of salutation, looking him straight in the face as he sat immediately before him, remarked:

"It seems to be a case of 'Dearly beloved Roger.'"

Hardy did not smile.

Professor Gregg gathered his notes together with careful precision of handling.

"Will you also go away?" he asked.

At the same time he stepped down from the low platform and, even as Hardy was in the act of rising, made as if he would take one of the student's chairs a few feet from him. Hardy made a slight gesture of invitation.

"If you do not mind," the Professor said, taking out his watch. Then, with his humorous smile, he added:

"This is really my time, you see, still. I have twenty minutes of lawful authority remaining. So you are at a disadvantage. I would like a few words with you, Shannon, for a fact. You are not a child, a schoolboy, as those others are. This I have recognized before. You are a man. You have shown it conclusively to-day. So it is worth my while to try to make my position clear to you."

"Thank you, sir," Hardy answered, his face un-

responsive; then, abruptly, "I think you are mistaken in calling the fellows children. They are just indignant men, who think, at least, that they have a right to be indignant. I am no more a man than the rest. I guess I wasn't quick enough in the get-away, that's all," and a wry smile came with the last words in spite of himself.

"Well, then, if you object to my calling you a man, as being an invidious distinction, you must at least allow me to say you are a gentleman," returned Gregg, "with the manners of a gentleman, and we will let it go at that. Also we will affirm nothing worse of your departed fellow students than that they are impulsive. Now impulsiveness at this critical moment of history may be a fatal blunder. If you will pardon the personal reference, my course of action to-day, whatever its consequences, was not born of impulse, but of long and exceedingly serious debate, debate ending in conviction of a duty most unwelcome to myself, believe me."

"I do not think it is clear to me," Hardy's voice was cold with passion overlong suppressed. And yet, he felt to his own increased irritation that he had never so admired Gregg as at this very moment.

"To be fair to one's bitter foe,—that was, if I am not mistaken, an article in the code of chivalry. We are not ready to reject that yet, I trust," commented the Professor.

"Do you consider Germany as your bitter foe?" Hardy asked the question with swift directness of emphasis.

"No. Not mine. Do you so regard her?"

"I do. As the enemy of justice, honour, law, of international morality and human brotherhood. Yes, sir, I do regard Germany at this time as my enemy and the enemy, as you remember Josiah Royce declared her more than a year ago, of the human race."

"Yes, I remember," replied Gregg, very gravely. "The 'wilful and deliberate enemy' I believe was Royce's characterization. Very well, Shannon, even admitting Germany to be our enemy, you would not deny that it is right to be fair to her. That only was my endeavour in the brief review I attempted this morning,—sadly as it failed,—just to hold you younger men steady, just, temperate."

"And, Professor Gregg," began Hardy, suddenly emboldened to let the ferment within him foam over the edge of his customary restraint, "you believed this could best be accomplished by reminding us of Germany's performance in Biblical Criticism?"

As he spoke, hardly conscious that he did so, Hardy rose from his chair and began pacing the floor before the place where Gregg was seated. Stopping suddenly now he faced his teacher with a glance of piercing, even solemn question. The glance was returned by one of complete dispassion.

"Precisely so. In this particular Germany's contribution to the sum of human achievement is undeniably beyond that of all other nations. We are all in her debt. This should never be forgotten."

"But, Professor Gregg, what if some of us, if I, for instance, dare to look upon this very thing, that

is, upon the reflex action upon Germany of this very achievement, as one of the factors among those at work in her present crusade against Christian civilization?"

"Well, Shannon," replied the older man, smiling slightly, "I think I might have been prepared for a suggestion of this nature from certain of your fellow students, but from you ——"

"Then, sir, you have forgotten that I am here in Peterboro preparing for the ministry because I think it time for a halt to be called on the paganizing tendencies of this time, and that, among them . . ." Here Hardy hesitated, shrinking from aiming another shaft at the man beyond whose mask of composure he could not fail to discover the wounded spirit.

"No, I have not forgotten that conversation of ours last Autumn, nor several which have followed it. I understand your position to be that of one bent on fighting those things which you have counted untrue, demoralizing,—what is called 'radical' criticism among the rest. But, my dear fellow, I have ventured to suppose that in the months you have been in Peterboro you had discovered some things not dreamed of in your previous philosophy."

"I have."

"I had gathered, possibly because of the courtesy and consideration habitual with you, but I think it went deeper,—that you had discovered that scientific study of the Scriptures is in reality a sacred obligation, religiously entered into, a solemn purpose to see things as they are and report on them faithfully. Can you still hold that such a purpose can lead men far astray?

Patient, reverent, fearless criticism is akin to prayer, Shannon, believe me."

"I do believe you, Professor Gregg," Hardy replied very gently. "I revere your reverence as I do your learning, as I do your honesty with us fellows, your sympathy for what some may suffer in the overturning of their trust in the authority and inspiration of the Bible, the Person of Christ, the Gospel Message."

"You have not suffered?" The question came quick and sharp.

"I cannot say that, sir," was the answer. "I can only repeat what I said when we first discussed these things, that my faith is not shaken. In fact I am no longer afraid that it can be shaken."

A change in Gregg's face betrayed the relaxing of mental tension. The irresistible delight which he found in Hardy Shannon, in his faith and his courage, ran like a physical sensation along his veins.

"Yes indeed, sir," Hardy went on; "I have been intensely interested in the intellectual work which I have been fortunate enough to do under you. I am grateful for the privilege and for the great benefits received. Whether I accept all of your conclusions is not the point in question. You see we are going very far from the point at which we began. Which is, that Germany is the 'home and hearth' of modern advanced criticism. This you have plainly once more declared. Germany sowed the seed of the critical movement and gave it the ground in which it has flourished and brought forth its proper fruit. Am I right so far?"

"Quite right."

"Well, then, it is a matter of common knowledge that in Germany religion in all its objective lines,—public worship, theological study, appointments of the clergy and so on,—has long since been handed over to the State. There is no division between things sacred and secular."

"Correct, essentially."

"I suppose it is further correct to assume that the spirit of the German Universities, of which theology is simply a department, is one of insistence upon purely naturalistic research into material sources as the basis of *all truth*. I am not far wrong, perhaps, in thinking that the historic doctrines of an authoritative revelation, of divine inspiration of the Scriptures, of a divine Christ,—all these things transcending physical demonstration, were long ago cast into the discard, or symbolized out of existence by scholars like Wellhausen," and Hardy glanced aside at the engraving of the German critic on the gray-green wall.

"Proceed," responded Gregg. "Your statements are perhaps a little bald, but I do not dispute them. Wellhausen certainly set all Germany in a flame in my early days there."

"The other Modernist schools," continued Hardy, "have followed humbly, accepting the output of the German rationalistic workshops as if it were a sacred, indubitable revelation. This, of course, signifies adherence to a purely naturalistic interpretation of the Bible and of Christianity. Now, on the basis of pragmatism simply, what has been the result of this

achievement to Germany? Will you let me speak very plainly, Professor?"

"I am always ready to listen to the opinions of those who oppose my positions."

"Well, sir, I have a friend,—I think I may be so bold as to call her my friend,—a woman much older than I am, a truly distinguished scholar, teacher and writer, Elinor Dane. I know her well although I have not known her long. Something like ten years ago she was in Europe and spent months in travel in Germany and in study in Berlin, also in Leipsic. She has told me that the depraved social conditions in Germany as she observed them were horrifying, that religion was at a lower ebb than in any Protestant country she has visited. Also that these conditions were most conspicuous, and acknowledged to be, in the University towns where theological professors can make their influence felt if anywhere, it would seem. Dissolute living prevailed in the army and among students all over the country.

"Miss Dane said, too, that the Bible had lost its power of appeal; that the springs of religious life seemed dried up, and even the practices and habits of devotion had vanished from among the people at large. The established State Church was avowedly free-thinking. Very generally, materialistic science and either Socialism or exaltation of the State, as religion, had taken the place of the old piety, reverence and godliness of life."

"May I ask if Miss Dane, your friend, lives here in Peterboro?" asked Gregg.

"Yes, sir. She does at the present time."

"Do you mean the author of a novel called '*The Stars in their Courses*'?"

"The same."

"I rarely read fiction but that book I read aloud to my wife. It was well worth reading. I was deeply impressed by it, that I remember. I am startled to hear how she looked upon conditions in Germany. But I know the twenty years since I was there have brought sad changes."

"Yes, sir. It was only about ten years ago that Miss Dane gained these personal impressions. She judged Germany at that time to be pretty generally given over to the doctrines of Karl Marx, on the one hand, or lapping up eagerly on the other the doctrines of Nietzsche and of the militarists who put these doctrines into definite, concrete form. The lust of conquest and the worship of force fairly bristled even then. Very well. Miss Dane neither knew very much nor thought very much in this connection about the influence of radical Biblical criticism, but she recognized the fact that Germany had somehow, within a generation or two, suffered tremendous loss. She had lost faith, had lost vital religion and, in the process, her moral standards had suffered shocking decline. Do you think, Professor Gregg, that the loss of Christian faith through destructive criticism can be without bearing on the mental and moral status from which the war proceeded? Without its part in Germany's initiation of it, and her barbaric methods of carrying it on?"

"Shannon, I cannot answer such a question offhand. It is a serious one. But you must remember that Germany is not alone in the decline of personal religion, in the growth of materialism, license and luxury. 'Grab and get' has become the policy between nations as among men the world around as we see to our sorrow. From my point of view Germany's scholars have been led by a Higher Power to undertake and carry forward a mighty work for truth. If the nation has itself suffered some temporary decline in practical religion during the term of this service, Germany must submit and wait for the 'wise years' to decide and to restore. Her Biblical work has been an unselfish achievement, not for herself, but for the world. It is an historic accomplishment not for this generation but for the ages."

With this Gregg rose and the two men walked together towards the classroom door, Hardy wondering in a kind of a daze if it were possible that this man, whose learning he justly revered, could be satisfied with the pronouncement he had made.

It appeared, however, that the Professor was not dissatisfied, neither was he by any means dismayed by the events of the morning, for as they parted he remarked with a meditative smile:

"I am afraid you will be annoyed, Shannon, but next week I expect to discuss this subject in substantially the same terms before our Club, the Symposium, as I have attempted to do this morning. You see it is my testimony. I can do no other than give it. You would do the same were you of my conviction."

Hardy Shannon held out his hand.

"I may not see you again, sir."

"But why so?"

"It cannot be long as things stand before the United States will declare war. When that happens I shall, of course, volunteer and, if I am accepted, shall enter the service at once."

The Professor took Hardy's hand in a lingering grasp.

"My blessing will go with you. But promise me, my boy, not to leave Peterboro without coming to see my wife. She has grown very fond of you."

"I promise," said Hardy.

X

THROUGH THE KITCHEN DOOR

"TELL me honestly! I'll promise not to tell. There is a lucid moment at last. Those children will have to stay in the other room five minutes now anyway, thank Heaven!"

Mrs. Hugh Gregg dropped into a wooden-bottomed chair as she spoke and propped her chin between her hands, elbows resting on a pine table.

"Honestly I don't know what it is you want me to tell," answered Hardy Shannon. He stood in shirt-sleeves at the lady's side, bending over a huge packing-box half filled with soft white bundles.

"You can guess. Do sit down. See, here is a cup of tea. They left one for each of us and an enamel-ware biscuit. You look tired out and no wonder, the way you have worked! Do stop now and take your tea while it is hot. You know well enough that I want you to tell me the facts about . . . Now! That's a good fellow!"

While she was speaking Mrs. Hugh had contrived, with her practised instinct for effects, to convey by a few touches a certain air of comfort to the bare table, for the moment her scene of action. As Hardy seated himself opposite her he realized suddenly that the subduing power of these days of crisis had

wrought their full effect upon Lydia Gregg. Certain it was that she had renounced her somewhat futile pursuit of interior decoration in favour of war work. Was it, perhaps, the nun-like coif and kerchief framing in her piquant face in severe white folds which rendered it thus sober, steadfast and demure? Anyway he liked her this morning better than he had before.

They were sitting in what the Gregg twins called the "beastly little kitchen" of the Mortals' Chambers, which were stripped of all their artistic superfluities. The kitchen was devoted now to the packing of hospital supplies, bandages and dressings for France and Belgium. These were prepared in enormous quantity at long tables in the assembly room. Into this room the kitchen door stood open.

From the ranks of the workers a babel of voices at this moment broke loose. Forty or more women and girls, hard at work, were pausing to welcome the cups of strong, undiluted tea which were distributed along their rows and ranks by Lydia Gregg's children, still regarded by Hardy Shannon somewhat in the light of marionettes. Over all the activities one person presided. The energy and intelligence of Nancy Chance was operative in every corner, working without noise or effect of effort.

"No one need be at pains to look out now for Nancy," thought Mary Minot, who from her workbench watched her friend with fond eyes. She had not forgotten the conversation with Hardy Shannon at her school gate a few weeks earlier. World rela-

tions had been re-created since then. But she hardly ever met Hardy Shannon any more. He was there in the kitchen now; would he find a way to speak to her? His friend Conrad had no trouble in doing so. She felt him approaching now.

Meanwhile, across the kitchen table Hardy was smiling at Lydia Gregg.

"This tea isn't half bad," he commented, hoping to turn aside her thirst for information. "Something like drinking the hemlock, perhaps, but . . ."

"As I was saying," interposed his companion, unyielding, "I must get you to tell me what it really was that happened at the Seminary the other day. In Professor Gregg's classroom."

"Oh, nothing worth mentioning," replied Hardy negligently.

"Come, come! You can't put me off that way. I am in the family and it is very important, you see, Mr. Shannon, for me to know the truth. Hugh has heard that Father Gregg made an impassioned anti-war and pro-German speech in one of his classes, and that the students rose up as one man, denounced him and then left the room *en bloc*."

"That is merely what did *not* happen," was the cool response.

"How do you know that it didn't?"

"I happened to be there at the time."

"Really?" Lydia Gregg's eagerness bore fresh emphasis. "Then you certainly *can* tell me everything! There can't be anything private in a public event like that."

"Certainly not. Your father-in-law in our small, informal elective group one morning three or four days ago, discoursed dispassionately, with all his usual judicial calm and without direct reference to the war, on the services Germany had rendered the world in the past. What 'we should always remember,' you know. Nothing very sensational about that, now was there?"

"At least it was ill-timed." It was obvious that Mrs. Hugh was slightly disappointed.

"The fellows neither rose up as one man, nor was there so much as a word spoken denouncing Professor Gregg. It is true that a number of them left the class in a quiet, orderly manner. There was fierce excitement on everywhere that morning if you remember,—last Friday,—but that was no excuse for their behaving like a parcel of bad-tempered children."

"I don't agree with you there. I would have slapped anybody in the face that morning who had tried to defend Germany to me."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't. If you had you would have been ashamed of it afterwards. Anyway the fellows, the less pig-headed of them at least, who walked out on strike, were ashamed of themselves. There was a reaction right off. I think several of them have gone to Professor Gregg to apologize. You can ask Conrad. He gave them some fatherly advice. He's a Senior, you know."

"Well, I am glad it was no worse," commented Lydia, "if it really was no worse than you make it. But I can tell you one thing, Mr. Hardy Shannon, my

husband's father *is* sympathetic with Germany through and through, and it worries us what will come of it. I don't believe, since nothing which the Germans have done up to now has cured him, that he can ever *be* cured."

Hardy, looking more serious than he had hitherto, made vague reply and Lydia pursued her theme.

"It is a virus in his blood," she said, "really a species of infection, I sometimes think. You see he went to Germany when he was a young man. He had not been married long, had been minister in a small parish in Vermont, I believe, when he took his wife and went to Germany for a year or more in some University there. One of the noted Divinity professors was making a tremendous stir just at that time, so Hugh has told me, setting the theological world on fire, you know. I don't remember the man's name."

"Was it Wellhausen?" asked Hardy, interested now.

"Yes, that was the name. Father Gregg must have made a hit with him for they have corresponded ever since, or did for a long while anyway. I suppose he has been under that man's influence all these years, but of course I don't know about that. He spent a Sabbatical year in Germany just after we were married, I remember. That was in 1896. He came back more of a heretic than ever, people said. But I'm not a judge, not being in religious circles. Neither is Hugh. Not now."

"I am sorry," said Hardy quietly.

"Oh, don't be sorry. We are still members of All

Souls'. Father Gregg got a degree from Göttingen in that year anyway. Perhaps that is why he can't see Germany and the Germans as we do. He looks at everything Teutonic, I think, through a kind of golden haze. Fancy that! You could hardly call him romantic, could you? but he does seem so in this one respect. I suppose it began when he was young and susceptible."

"Does Mrs. Gregg feel the same way?"

"Oh, my, no! Hugh was born in Prussia, I am sorry to say. She had to keep the home fires burning. That was her end. And I imagine, although she says very little, that she fairly hated the atmosphere and customs of family life there. The everlasting *Kinder, Küche, Kirche,* you know. The women personally over there are a bit thick, for a fact,—temperamentally, too, I guess. Life must have been hard for a woman like Mother Gregg in many ways. And she has been an invalid really ever since they returned. But Father Gregg never puts things together."

"Men of his stamp are apt to be absent-minded. But he is most devoted to Mrs. Gregg."

"Oh, yes," Lydia Gregg assented without enthusiasm. "But you have no idea how people are talking about him now, and what I am thinking of is how very serious it will be, his sympathy with Germany,—which he certainly does show, whatever you say,—if things go on as they promise to."

"It surely looks like war, when Brand Whitlock is withdrawn from Belgium," remarked Hardy.

"The sooner it comes now the better, I am sure of

that. But what a disgrace it would be for Hugh, for all of our family, if his father ——"

"Professor Gregg I hardly think is likely to disgrace his family." Hardy's tone had a touch of coldness. He rose as he spoke and crossed to a row of barrels waiting to be marked. He was growing tired of the conversation, remembered now that he never could stand more than five minutes of Mrs. Hugh without being bored. Furthermore he had had in view as long as he cared to a little group precisely in his line of vision through the open door into the assembly room.

Mary Minot, in her place at a bench-end, was busy, eyes and hands, folding with mathematical accuracy the long pieces of gauze which were piled unmercifully high before her. But she was not too busy, Hardy had been observing, to keep up her end of an animated conversation with Conrad who had planted himself, obviously of deliberate intention, at the end of the bench where he could bar out interruption, have things all his own way. . . . Yes, he was there still.

Why in thunder, reflected Hardy, didn't Conrad get to work on what he came for—packing the boxes? It was hardly to be supposed that he had been appointed floor-walker! But anybody would think it was his bounden duty to stand there and watch Mary Minot at her work. Not a bad job either, if you stood where Conrad stood and had her raising those gray eyes of hers from moment to moment to your face. If you stood where you could watch the dimples come and go in her cheeks, and that bloom on them which made

her face like the face of a child. She might strike you as looking like a wise child,—that odd innocence of her. You don't often see it somehow, and the line of her pale brown hair along her temples, so frightfully artless in a way and so fetching, too!

But when you were out in that beastly little kitchen, drinking bitter tea with Dr. Gregg's versatile and volatile wife and staving off her curiosity and her marionettes, it wasn't so much fun. You felt like whistling to Conrad to give him a line on the labours which he had shaken off on other fellows. But what if that would be as hard on Mary Minot as on Conrad? It looked as if they were both pretty well satisfied with the situation. What a bend that girl has to her neck. No one else has just that grace of line, and that round little pillar of a throat,—how it holds her head up like a flower. Confound Conrad! He needn't think he can have it all to himself!

But then again, perhaps it wouldn't do to confound Conrad. There was his twisted leg. Poor old chap! One knew that the man thought in some moods that all the odds in life were against him. Just now things were going his way. He positively was making Mary Minot laugh and stop in her work for several seconds. Must have made one of those clever, satirical remarks of his. Well, so much the better for Conrad! It was up to any fellow who knew him to be glad, help it along,—anything but be a sneaking spoil-sport. Especially any one who knew how the poor fellow raged now,—with the chances of our going into the war,—at his own wretched handicap; any one who knew of his

struggles with his religious doubts and distresses; how he limped up and down his room all night sometimes,—all that sort of thing. . . .

Great Scott! If Mary Minot liked to have Conrad talk to her, if she would like him to forever,—let other men stand aside! Mind their own business! If she let you hold her hand half a minute that night at the gate, why you were in luck once, that's all. It's hands off now! . . .

Such had been the undertow moving in Hardy's mind during the tea drinking with Lydia Gregg. He broke up their interview the better to clear himself from its current. There was hard work waiting to be done. That was altogether to the good. The twins were dashing in, too, now with the teacups.

Nancy Chance strayed into the kitchen. She put on a charming air of official severity as she inspected Hardy's work, found fault with his lettering and frowned upon his paint-stained hands. These two had become good comrades. Nancy remarked casually:

"Brother Conrad appears to have lost his head, *non é vero?*"

"Well, yes. Perhaps he is by way of losing his heart into the bargain," Hardy returned lightly.

"Oh, that happened long ago, my friend. Are you so unobserving as not to be familiar with the fact?"

Looking her directly then in the face Hardy perceived that the vivid light and colour which belonged to it were extinguished, that under her pretty decisions and precisions there lay a desperate weariness.

"Sit down, Miss Chance, if you please."

With the words Nancy found herself gently but rather strongly impelled to take a seat at the kitchen table. Mrs. Hugh had vanished, was in some nook or cranny elsewhere, telephoning. At least he guessed at it. Something to that effect had been said. Hardy captured her daughter Dorothy, known to him now as to all her world as Dame, and besought her to make Miss Nancy a fresh cup of tea on the instant. Then he called Walter, her mate, to stand guard for a few minutes over his prisoner and himself dashed out to the elevator.

Reappearing just in the nick of time, as Dame was pouring out the steaming tea, Hardy laid on the table before Nancy a circular object wrapped in brown paper. His face was flushed apparently with triumph.

"Guess!" he cried. "If things go on to the bitter end this may be the last delight of its kind for many a year. Make the most of it!" Not waiting for their guess he tore off the paper and brought forth a large, nicely browned mince pie, exclaiming:

"Now draw and quarter! Have no fastidious scruples! It came from a high-brow caterer. Brass tacks for all other Mortals with their tea. For our Chieftain, mince pie! Also for her hench-boys and girls."

Gaiety prevailed while the unexpected feast was shared, Hardy noting with satisfaction the return of lustre to Nancy's face. But the mood of that day was too sober for sustained merriment. The stroke of the clock found all at their tasks again. Hardy returned

to his barrels and boxes. Conrad now took his place beside him in the kitchen with casual comment on his having had occasion to quit work for a few moments. Hardy did not recriminate.

"Do you know what to do without the boss?" Conrad asked.

"Yes, for a little while, but she'll be here."

As they spoke Lydia Gregg appeared, coming from the large room with an enormous tray of rolled bandages, sending Conrad quickly to the right-about to wheel the small truck down between the work-benches so to gather the main harvest. Nothing loath, he was off again and Hardy began to grouch inwardly as he saw himself sentenced to another tête-à-tête.

"I want to tell you something, Mr. Shannon," Lydia began with renewed force of emphasis, "but I thought it wouldn't be best to say anything when others were here. That's why I sent Mr. Conrad into the other room."

As she paused, Hardy asked nonchalantly:

"Well, nothing tragic, I hope? You sound a little stirred, Mrs. Gregg."

"I am a little stirred," was her reply, "and more than a little, believe me. I was speaking a while ago on the telephone to the Doctor and he tells me, anent that matter of his father's defending and praising Germany before your class,—however you choose to describe it,—that his talk was really of a very subversive nature. That was the Doctor's word. I have an idea what it means. And,—just think of it, Mr. Shannon!—he is going to do the same thing to-morrow

night at the meeting of the Symposium. It will be his turn to speak or read a paper and he actually intends to take advantage of the occasion in this way!"

As she stood to set forth her tidings Lydia Gregg unconsciously dropped all pretence of occupation, abandoning herself to the force of outraged sensation. Hardy listened without turning his head or looking up from his work. When she stopped speaking he asked casually:

"Is that all?"

"All? Enough, I should think," she said sharply.

"Well, Mrs. Gregg, I think we have something just now even more important to think of. Something which will put a stop to any danger of that happening which you fear." As he spoke, Hardy straightened up and drew from an inner pocket a folded half-sheet of newspaper.

"I got this when I was out a few minutes ago," he said in an undertone, handing the paper to Mrs. Hugh. "I decided not to spring it on the rest of them. It might break into the work, you know."

As she glanced at the headlines he said solemnly:

"President Wilson, you see, has just asked Congress to declare the existence of a state of war with Germany."

For once Lydia was silent and her colour came and went. Then, as her eyes flew down the columns, she exclaimed:

"And a mass meeting of all Peterboro's loyal citizens has been called for to-morrow night! They are to 'pass resolutions urging upon Congress the duty of

immediate and unequivocal action.' . . . You are right. There will be no meeting of the Symposium."

By four o'clock the rooms were emptied of the crowd of workers. Dusk was gathering. Only a charwoman clearing up the litter of gauze and waste, and Nancy Chance overseeing her performance remained.

But there was much beside for Nancy to think of and do; imperfect dressings to examine, pull apart, classify; material to select and lay out in order for to-morrow morning, lists to make; accounts to look over.

These last, hardest of all with a head dizzy from fatigue, waited for her on a high desk in a corner of the wide alcove which opened from the main assembly room opposite the kitchen. To that point, all beside accomplished, Nancy made her way and, finding the corner already dusky, paused to light a gas jet, the only lighting apparatus available. A sense, peculiarly drear, of loneliness and aloofness, took possession of her as this was accomplished. The very flare of the gas flame enhanced the gloom of the denuded place, once so appealing in its refinement of luxurious comfort.

As she wearily tried to lift her slender body upon the tall stool a firm hand suddenly placed under her arm at the right spot upheld and steadied her to her perch. Turning quickly she saw Dr. Hugh Gregg at her elbow.

"Hello, Doctor," she said coolly, not overpleased, it

seemed, at this silent approach. "Lyde has gone. Dame and Pyth, too. They all went an hour ago. There is to be dancing, you know, after the tea at Blinn's."

With this Nancy drew her ledger forward and began turning leaves.

"I suppose so," Dr. Gregg answered deliberately. "Nobody but you around for the dirty work, as usual. Somehow you never get off, Mischance. They are all mighty willing to join in the innocent glee business, but when that's over you're the only one I notice who stands by."

"Entirely wrong," she returned carelessly, picking up her pen. "There have been forty-three people here all day, all working like dogs. I've had nothing to do but look on and stroll around. This is my end, that's all. And why do you call me that idiotic nickname?"

"Do, Nancy, let those figures go, can't you?" exclaimed the Doctor, ignoring her question. "Great Heavens! girl, don't you know that we're as good as at war this minute? What are you going to do?"

Hugh Gregg had taken his place now beside the desk, leaning against the wall and looking steadily down into the girl's face. Her right hand holding her long penholder lay along the open ledger; her left hand supported her cheek as she leaned upon the desk lifting her eyes now to his face,—unsmiling, tired, the eyes were, but clear and frank.

"What am I going to do, Doctor Hugh?" she

repeated. "Why, I suppose what I am doing now. I can't fight, can I?"

"You'll have something to do besides picking lint," he asserted with slighting emphasis, "and all the rest of this tomfoolery. There's devilish heavy work ahead for me. The same for you. Notice that, Nancy. The kind of stuff you're made of will be called for. You may as well be getting ready."

A deep flush rose to Nancy's cheeks. She did not speak but her eyes searched his face with startled question.

"What about Lydia? What will she do?" she inquired pointedly.

"Oh, some kind of vaudeville stunts, she and the kids, most likely. There'll have to be a lot of camp-followers on both sides. 'As well singers as players upon instruments will be there. Selah.'" He added the Scriptural phrase with the mocking emphasis of cynicism.

"I can't see why you should go out of your way always to indicate your lack of reverence," the girl commented severely. "People can deduce, without that, that you are a good deal of a heathen."

"Oh, yes," he replied coolly, lighting a cigarette, but keeping his eyes fixed on her face; "I don't profess to be anything else. Do you?"

Nancy bit her lip. Her look was clouded, repellent. She did not speak.

"Why, my dear Mischance, why should we make any pother about it?" Hugh Gregg challenged her. "I am the son of a Christian minister and have turned

pagan because of the lack of *facts* my father can offer on which to base a Christian profession. You are the daughter of a Christian minister, and have become a pagan because of the lack of *faith* your father offers on which to base a Christian profession. It comes to the same thing in the end,—to both of us. But we don't send the town-crier out to announce it."

"If you please, Dr. Gregg," answered the girl, "I have not asked you to define my position, and I do not accept your classifying me with yourself in things religious. Perhaps I should be flattered, but I am not."

"All right. Let that go. What do I care? What I was speaking about is something of real urgency. I am planning already to go over, if I can make it, in the first medical unit that is sent. Nurses will be wanted. You had better get in line. Freshen up that course you took a few years ago. I'll arrange a short surgical course for you in the hospital. Listen, child! When I go over there I want you. Where I go, I want you to go. And I don't want any nonsense about your being afraid of me either. That's my business, see?"

Nancy's lip curled and a light of fine disdain flashed from her eyes.

"Where I am you are safe, Nancy. You can trust me for that." Hugh Gregg said this with sudden, unwonted gentleness.

"If you please, I am busy, and I am tired. And it is getting late." Nancy spoke wearily now, even patiently. "Please let me have a chance to go on with my work."

"All right, Nancy." As he spoke the Doctor turned quickly to leave the alcove. "But remember, please, to report at the hospital promptly or your application will be too late. It's life and death we're dealing in now. Don't make any mistake about that. And you are needed."

Left to herself, Nancy slipped down from her stool and glanced through the dusky vista of the apartment. The charwoman was gone. Involuntarily she turned and crossed quickly to a front window. Here she stood for an instant, looking steadily down into the street below with its flaring electric lights.

A man crossed the pavement and stepped into a waiting car,—the sound of the sharply closed door reached her where she stood. The car wheeled and passed from sight.

Turning from the window, Nancy found her heart beat so loud that it sounded in her own ears. She had discovered suddenly that the decision of this moment might shape and colour all her life. Now she recognized, although dimly, the fact that the decision was made.

BOOK II

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

XI

"A CERTAIN MAN HAD TWO SONS"

LOWRIE LANE in the quiet old town of Melrose, although now a proper street, retains certain signs of the days when it was in reality a country lane, when it led past quiet farms to an old manor-house of Revolutionary fame.

Not infrequent here are remnants of ancient apple orchards standing next to smooth shaven lawns, and conventional flower beds. As one passes down the lane there comes into view at the right a group, almost a grove, of tall pine trees. Although of no great extent this cluster of native trees, carefully preserved from their earlier day, retains still something of characteristic silence and shade. The smooth carpet of brown needles in the fragrant dusk lies unbroken save by fragile ferns which here and there pierce its meshes.

Beyond the pines there suddenly comes in sight down the lane a group of buildings of almost monastic suggestion. Their appearing rarely fails to strike a stranger with a sense of arresting charm. A broad, unbroken stretch of lawn is bounded here, on the far side, by a venerable and beautiful Gothic church of gray stone. Near the church, and standing at a right angle to it, thus with the tall pines partially enclosing the lawn, stretches the long front of a dwelling house. This house, built of the same stone as the church, and

in harmony with its Gothic and ecclesiastical structure, is softened by luxuriant growth of ivy. Long windows, opening upon a flower-bordered terrace, give enticing hints of a homelike interior. Between the house and the church and beyond them glimpses of an old-fashioned, box-bordered garden are caught, with a tennis court in the background.

Within this court on a summer afternoon, a few months after the opening of hostilities with Germany by the United States, a young man in khaki was playing a spirited game with a girl in white linen, while under one of the tall elm trees which stood on guard at the boundary line, a lady sat beside a rustic table to watch them. The lady was of gentle and serene countenance, the lines of it softened by abundant gray hair. The young man was Hardy Shannon. His antagonist in the game was Amy Shannon, his cousin. The lady beside the tea-table was his mother, wife of the Reverend Charles Shannon. For twenty-seven years Charles Shannon had been pastor of the congregation belonging to the Gothic church, and for the same length of time he had resided with his growing family in the old manse. The church was known in Melrose simply as the Stone Church; its pastor and its pastor's wife were beloved and revered, criticised and delighted in as one's very and altogether own, by the whole flock.

Perhaps it is hardly accurate to speak of Mrs. Shannon as of one subjected to criticism. Not to criticise the pastor and preacher of one's church would be to be indifferent to him. There are so many

obvious ways open to the approach of criticism! Either he must be rated a better pastor than preacher, or the reverse; he must be too conservative or too advanced; too clerical or too worldly; overgenerous or under, as the case may be fancied to be. But with the wife of the Reverend Charles Shannon there seemed to be no like vulnerable points of attack. From the young years in which she had come among them to her present late middle age Rachel Shannon had moved among her husband's people as a ministering angel. And as such she was tenderly regarded. For she possessed a temperament singularly devout and duteous, allied to a transparent and appealing sincerity. But it is quite possible that her power of winning personal devotion was owing not less to the unaffected joy and spontaneity of her spirit.

On the small table by Mrs. Shannon's side, as she now sat to watch the game, a shining silver tea-service twinkled gaily as it caught the afternoon sun. Mrs. Shannon smiled to herself as she took up her knitting, recalling the comments of certain just-departed visitors to whom she had administered tea.

"It is all so English!" they had repeated over and over with the eager emphasis of those who believe that they contribute an impression hitherto unrecognized.

"It is dear of them to say it. I like to have it so."

Mrs. Shannon's thoughts ran back then, as they would often and fondly, to the home in Surrey where she had spent her girlhood. But there was no wistfulness in her expression, for, dear as that had been, this

was dearer. This was heart's home. And who ever was so abundantly happy as she? What could have been higher privilege than to live all these years in this charmed circle of quiet beauty, with some part to render in her husband's work and that work so satisfying in its steady fruitfulness?

Such a life did not seem destined for them at the start, for Charles Shannon, never a strong man, had been threatened in his early manhood with serious breakdown. There had been times of haunting anxiety, but these were long since left behind, and a degree of physical energy, never great, but sufficient for his labour, had succeeded. Always, in the dark days or the bright, his faith and fortitude had endured every test. How high-minded he was, how sweet-hearted, how utterly her own! And they had had these twenty-seven years together in the old manse. Perhaps they might have ten years more. Of course, there would be changes, for the boys would never be with them as in the early days. But they would come and go.

Mrs. Shannon's eyes followed Hardy's movements now, and dwelt with unguarded delight on the grace and vigour of them. But the delight, after all, was not for long unqualified, for how could she look at Hardy and not think of Park? And of Park, her older son, the thought at this hour was one of corroding uncertainty. Little they knew of him now, and how far removed was that little from his father's hopes and wishes for him, from her own dreams!

If she only could know, even, where he was and in

what activities he was concerned! It would be easier, though, if she knew less than the little which she was forced to guess. If, as they supposed, he was in Germany now, he might be with Germany in sympathy, might be with her, even, in some definite line of activity.

Sharply divisive though this would be it was not the worst of Rachel Shannon's fears, for there were those letters which he used to write to her, letters which she had carefully kept from his father's eyes! For nothing could be gained by inflicting pain like hers upon him. Park was the very apple of his eye and the point of all his pride,—he had so little for himself. The letters were hard; they touched ungently things sacred, as Park well knew, to her. He had lost the light of the old love, the old faith since he had come under the influence of Herman Lechler. But she would not let herself go along that line. Her boy had lost his way . . . but he would find it again. He was young, by nature rash and impetuous, one who must break his own path, even if it lay through thorns.

Park had never had Hardy's tenderness, his sensitive perception of others' feelings and views. How could any one be expected to be like Hardy? and with this thought delight returned. It was hard, in a way, to see him in his khaki, know him bound for France and the perils of war. How impossible all that seemed in this sweet June sunshine! Her non-resistant convictions had risen in protest at first. She knew Hardy himself had felt that the resort to arms was all a horrible mistake; but, the war once on, it could not be

right to leave the world in such hands as those of a victorious Germany. God grant that we be led aright! God have pity on the mothers of English boys to-day, and the mothers of France and of all the nations!

There was a cry of triumph from the tennis ground. With a play of dashing effectiveness Amy had succeeded in scoring a stroke. Hardy's applause was generous.

"My goodness, girl, you have learned to play tennis since last summer, I'll say that!"

Mrs. Shannon observed the high colour as it heightened in Amy's cheek, and the wilful lift of her chin as scorning Hardy's praise. "As if I didn't beat you then," she retorted.

Amy had learned a great deal besides tennis since last summer, Mrs. Shannon reflected, and again doubtful musing gave its shadow to her face. Did Hardy see how very pretty the child had grown? How could he *not* see it? And it was not only the swift blooming of a beauty no longer that of her childhood which was to be reckoned with in Amy now. The reticence, the self-consciousness, the incalculable fitfulness and ardours of adolescence were full upon her.

And yet, even as a child, Amy had been a problem, a lively cause of perplexity to her foster-mother. Receiving her in her babyhood, as a sacred trust from her mother, the cousin who was her close friend when that friend, Mrs. Chandler, was facing death, she had taken the child into her heart's heart. She had given her, this also at the mother's wish, the family name. She had nurtured and cherished her with impartial and

unreserved affection. But before Amy was old enough for kindergarten, as Mrs. Shannon could now recall, she had shown a baffling disposition, one into which it was hard for a woman like herself fully to enter.

Ego-centric, Mrs. Shannon thought, was the word people used now, temperamental,—yes, that precisely. And, according to the logic of such a nature, intensely jealous. It had been a study to help the child to surmount the weakness and develop the better elements of her own character. Sometimes it had seemed for months together that all was going smoothly; then would come some swift, sudden revelation of undercurrents of passionate distrust and resentment for which no theory could be found.

But of late these characteristics had faded from notice in a growing and endearing gentleness. Amy had taken to petting her Mamma as she always called Mrs. Shannon; showering small, engaging flatteries upon her. How charming she could be! But a little sigh followed hard upon the thought. The last thing to be desired for Hardy. . . .

Just as this hitherto unformulated fear strayed across her mind, Mrs. Shannon caught sight, beyond the south wall of the church, of the postman passing down the lane. Always there was the hope, at least the possibility, of a letter from Park, coming by some devious way. She rose then and, taking her work-basket on her arm, crossed the turf to the path leading to the veranda at the garden front of the house. She stopped an instant there to wave her hand to "the children."

As she passed into the house a twofold misgiving stirred within her, misgiving for what she left behind of possibility, misgiving for the possibility she went to meet.

"But that is just being a mother!" she said to herself, and smiled.

The game went on in the tennis court. Five, ten minutes passed, minutes in which Hardy was frankly bent on winning rather than on playing off to flatter or favour his opponent. As the end came, and she saw her game lost, Amy tossed her racket across the court, vexed at being beaten, although aware that she should have been furious with Hardy if he had not played his best against her.

Childish petulance came suddenly to the fore as Amy crossed to the tea-table where she stood to exclaim:

"I suppose the tea is simply cold and horrid now! What did you want to keep on so long for?"

Hardy followed her, not in the least disturbed. He was fairly familiar with Amy's humours. A glance into the teapot and her displeasure deepened.

"Tepid tea! Too terrible!" commented Hardy laughing lightly. "Never mind, I will run up to the house and get some ice. You know how you like iced tea. And Mother has left piles of cakes for us," with which he was off. Amy settled down in an armchair with a gloomy brow.

"Pouting still?" Hardy asked casually as he returned, slipped bits of ice into the cups and poured the tea over them.

"I never pout, Hardy," the girl returned bitingly.

"You know I never do. What makes you talk to me as if I were a kid? I've had enough of it. I simply can't stand it any longer."

"Now look here, my angel," returned Hardy coolly, "it's all right if you want a quarrel. I'll give you one, good and plenty in five minutes. But don't let's mix things. Tea now. Fight later. Tea-fight it shall be."

Deliberately filling one hand with small frosted cakes and holding his teacup in the other, he dropped down at Amy's feet and began eating and drinking with a will, in no way interested in her moral temperature.

Amy found his example, when combined with a healthy appetite for tea and cakes, irresistible. She tried her best to preserve an expression of injured dignity, but when she found Hardy's eyes lifted to hers with a quizzical challenge in their laughter this was not easy.

"If you're over your grouch I'd like another cup, please," he remarked.

As she administered this Amy's good temper appeared about to assert itself. At least her gloom moderated to a very pretty pensiveness.

"Oh, Hardy," she cried, "why is it that you are so different this year from what you ever were before?"

"How different?"

"Your mind is never here. I feel it all the time, even when you come from camp like this with only three or four days to be with us."

"Why should it be?" he asked soberly. "There

are several things for a man to think of just at present. You haven't noticed that, my Amy."

"That is it," she murmured. "That is just what I mean. I am grown up now. But you never talk to me as if I were capable of understanding anything real, the things you care for, the things you talk to Mamma about. You always act as if I were just the same age as I was when you first went to college."

Somewhat to Hardy's surprise, as he looked up in her face, he saw Amy's colour come and go as if under the impulsion of real feeling; also sudden tears had sprung to her eyes. For some psychological reason Hardy Shannon had never until this present moment realized his "little sister's" beauty. He had heard mention made of it not infrequently; had spoken of it himself approvingly, liking a girl in his family circle to be good looking rather than otherwise. Now, at last, he felt and felt with sudden tingling of his pulses, how very pretty, even how very bewitching this girl was who insisted so imperatively that she was "grown up."

As their eyes met Amy said with a little confusion, which—why, he could not have explained,—he found distinctly charming:

"You see, Hardy, you don't care for me at all now since I am not a kid you can frolic with, take pig-a-back . . ." and with this the tears overflowed and copiously.

"I don't care for my little sister?" Hardy repeated slowly, with rising inflection.

"I am not your little sister!" With this Amy flung

away from him, sprang up and darted across the lawn, Hardy after her. He reached the entrance to the path between the low box-hedges before her. Upon this the girl turned at a sharp angle and raced, as she had often raced in other summers, straight across the unmown field to the pines.

He caught her at last in the shadow of the great trees and with compelling strength drew her down to a place beside him on the ground.

"Now tell me what all this is about, Amy."

He was cool and unhurried; she flushed and panting but unbelievably lovely withal, he thought.

"Either, in spite of all you say, you *are* still a kid, racing me as you used to through the fields, or ——" here he broke off.

There was a pulsating silence then between them. Hardy had a curious sense of being other than himself, of being moved by impulses not before familiar. He did not care particularly which way they moved him next. The important thing seemed to be to console Amy and stop her mysterious tears. She had never been a cry-baby. Was it possible she had become a woman? A man's woman at that?

"Oh, Hardy! Hardy!" Amy cried now, covering her face with her hands. "I have wondered sometimes" (with this she yielded to his importunate fingers and let the hands fall passively into his), "how it was that you could know me all these years and never know me really at all. For all there is of me . . . all there ever has been . . . since I stopped being just a child . . . has been . . ." There

was a long sob. Then she half whispered one word: "*you.*" Then she added brokenly, "And I thought sometime . . . perhaps . . . you would care too." She sprang to her feet then. He rose and stood beside her.

"Amy, I have always cared," he began, suddenly grown very gentle.

"Don't!" she cried half wildly. "I am tired out with that. . . . Oh, forgive me, dear, dear Hardy. . . . Go away to the war. . . . Forget me. . . . I shall always pray for you . . . always," here her voice was choked again with passionate crying.

This was soon subdued, however, by his arms around her. One hand pressed her head against his breast and held it fast.

"Don't try to get away now," he murmured. "Foolish little bird! You are mine now, Amy. Will you be mine always? Do you really care?"

For answer she slipped from his arms and slid down to the ground. Then, to his amazement, she pressed her lips to his feet.

"For Heaven's sake, Amy, if you're going to do that, wait till I can get on another pair of shoes!" with which Hardy laughed unmirthfully.

Amy sprang up, and, a hand touching lightly each of his shoulders, looked into his eyes, her own radiant with sudden ecstasy of exultation.

"Forgive my silliness, but you are like a young god to me, Hardy Shannon."

"Wrong this time," he answered lightly. "A young

man, that's the size of it. Lots of us! You can see us by the thousand in ranks and files up at Plattsburg. All pretty much alike, Amy."

"Not to me, you old dear," she returned, undisturbed by his dryness. "Come along now," and with her hand in his arm she tripped lightly over the smooth, pine-needle-paved way.

"I am too happy to speak," she whispered softly, as they came out into the broad sunlight. "How I shall always love those woods! But Hardy, don't let us tell any one, not just now!"

"Tell?" he began, then stopped.

"Yes, don't let us tell even Mamma yet, not to-day anyway, that we are engaged."

"That is as you say, Amy," the young man made serious response and walked on towards the house by her side. An indefinable, uncomprehended sense of humiliation had fallen upon him.

XII

ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK

MRS. SHANNON found letters on the hall table, business letters for her as housewife, one for Hardy in an odd unfamiliar handwriting; beneath all, one with a foreign stamp with which she was not familiar. The address was in Park's handwriting, but the letter was for his father, the first in a full year. With every step as she climbed up to her husband's study the mother's heart sank lower. Where was the letter written? What new hardness, what new pang did it bring?

Opening the study door a passing sense of relief came with sight of its wide, sunlit spaces; its loved lining of books, books which were friends, on every side; its air of ordered, scholarly distinction. . . . And her husband seated at his desk,—how well he fitted the environment, how he created the atmosphere! A man of sixty, Charles Shannon, but looking ten years less, his brown hair showing no touch of gray, his face, refined, gentle, a student's if not a scholar's face. With his inbred courtesy it was matter of course that he should rise as she entered, draw a chair near his own for her, welcome her with that smile in his eyes which belonged to her alone. Passionately she rebelled against being bearer of possible pain to him so gentle, so infinitely dear.

He took the letter and after studying the postmark observed that it seemed to have been posted in Zurich. Well, that was better than Berlin, did not Rachel think so? Then he opened and read, handing her one after the other as he read, the separate, boldly-written sheets, bearing date of mid-April. Surprisingly short under the circumstances, the letter ran as follows:

"DEAR FATHER:

"You will not think it strange that I have not written during these months of tumult and uncertainty. Neither can it surprise you that I cannot write now in detail, fully or freely. You may never receive this letter. At best it will be censored and long on the way.

"I can only guess the changes at home which have come already as I am writing, and those which will follow before this letter is in your hands. Of public events I may not write. A few personal points it seems incumbent upon me to give you.

"I am for the time being in Zurich, coming here as secretary and assistant to Professor Lechler, the position which I have had the honour to fill for two years and more, as you know. He has been sent here for six months by the German Government, in a purely academic position, at the request of the University of Zurich.

"You can hardly be ignorant of Professor Lechler's remarkable work in the domain of rationalistic philosophy (sceptical you would probably call it), a branch of study which flourishes in Zurich even in this time of war. What will, however, be news to you is, that I not only follow him to Zurich, not only accept his philosophical as I do his political principles, but have been so fortunate as to win his daughter for my wife. Her name is Agatha; she is perhaps not notable for

grace or charm or beauty. Neither is she ill-looking. She is her father's daughter. I need not say more in her favour, nor will I say more as to her intellectual, her religious or her social standards.

"You will be able to judge of these last when I inform you that we were married (it was last October) 'without benefit of clergy,' both of us having outgrown all superstitions relating to the nature of marriage. We alike believe supremely and serenely in the law of individual liberty, as we do of collective responsibility. Not the less we have entered into our present relation in good faith and mutual satisfaction. Also with the approval of Agatha's father.

"If, my dear father, you and Mother desire an explicit word regarding the 'religious' position which I have now reached, I will say in fewest words that the new social order is my religion, wherein the Common Man shall find the fulfilment of his needs, his instincts, his demands. To this, if to any definite object, my life is to be dedicated.

"Be sure that I realize, and painfully, the breach between you and us in sympathies and principles which this letter may emphasize. However, I believe you will approve its honesty. And I must implore you, as I close, to believe actually and without shadow of doubt, that I shall never fail you in dutiful service, and can always be called upon to go to you should occasion arise in which my presence could be needed or desired.

"Your affectionate son,

"PARK SHANNON."

As Charles Shannon gathered the thin sheets of the letter together, folded them mechanically and laid them on his desk, his wife perceived the ashen-gray hue of his face and the unsteadiness of his hand. For herself, at that moment, she had a sense of having been turned

into stone. But that was a matter absolutely negligible. What effect, what dreadful, unthinkable effect would such a letter have upon her husband? Park himself had no place in her conscious thinking just then.

"Well, dear," Charles Shannon said after a moment in which he gathered himself together. He laid his hand upon hers, continuing: "It is too soon, isn't it? to discuss such news? —there are so many different sides to it, you know."

"Charles, I do not grasp it yet."

"If you don't mind, Rachel, I think perhaps . . . for a little . . . it would be easier . . ."

"Yes. I will go. But don't let it hurt too deep, too hard. Park will come back to us," and she bent and kissed his forehead.

He could not meet her look. He did not try to speak. So she left him.

As Rachel Shannon came slowly down the staircase she paused a moment on the landing to pull herself together. She passed one hand over her face as if brushing away a palpable web of anguish gathered there. Below, some one was coming in at the open front door. It was "the children."

Amy's arm was thrown over Hardy's shoulder. Just inside the door they stopped. The mother saw them stand and face each other. Hardy's face she could not see; Amy's was full in view. Her eyes were lifted to his full of arch, provocative challenge. She said something. Her words were not heard on the landing, but Hardy bent and kissed her, kissed her

with a certain strange solemnity, unlike his ordinary brotherly salute.

They would not need to break their news to her to-morrow!

She saw Hardy draw away from Amy's detaining hand then and turn with sudden eagerness to the hall table. The letter which Mrs. Shannon had noticed lay there awaiting him.

For a moment Hardy stood, his letter in hand, studying the envelope. The postmark, Camp D——, signified Barton Conrad. Since May he had been there, serving as an acting chaplain. But the handwriting of the address was not only not Conrad's, it was that of a woman,—a stilted, slightly fantastic hand. Hardy's thought for an instant ran over the ranks of girls and women of his acquaintance who might be serving in any capacity at Camp D——.

Hitting upon nothing, he seemed forced to look to the letter itself for enlightenment. Not a bad idea either, he reflected, mocking his own roundabout mental method as he broke open the envelope. His face changed instantly then. On a half sheet of paper in a tremulous scrawl, in which he still could recognize Conrad's characteristics, was written in pencil: "Dear Shannon, I am pretty sick—down and out, I guess. Wish I could see you once ——" That was all.

Had his friend started to write "once *more*" and refrained? A faintly formed word, hastily abandoned it seemed, was crossed out uncompleted. That the note was from Conrad there was no question. That he was in a bad way was no less certain.

Hardy passed his mother on the stairway as he sprang up to reach his room and consult time-tables.

"You look as if you had had bad news," she commented gravely. The change in his face from the moment before was startling.

"Who's your letter from, Hardy?" Amy called from below. "I got a glimpse of it and I saw it was from a lady," she added playfully.

His mother's concern and Amy's nonsense were both lost on Hardy then.

"I will explain by and by," he called back and disappeared up the stairs.

He must get to camp D—— to-night if he could, but this was not all he must do. To-morrow, Sunday, was the last day of his leave. Could he have his time extended if Conrad's case were to demand it? If so, was it necessary to act now? Deep in these pressing considerations Hardy was interrupted by a knock on his door.

The parlour-maid stood with a letter in her hand.

"Mr. Hardy," she said, "Dr. Shannon told me to give you this to read. He says, please, if you would return it to him as soon as you have read it. But he isn't feeling very well so won't talk it over. I think that is what he told me, sir,—not till some other time."

"Very well. Thank you."

Hardy closed the door, laid his time-tables down and seated himself, drawing a long breath as he recognized the letter just given him as from Park, his brother.

"Oh, what a blow!" was his inward cry as he read

on through one hard, bruising sentence after another. "What a blow for Father and Mother! Heavens and earth! Married,—and nobody knows how,—to a daughter of that Prussian materialist, Herman Lechler. At this particular point in time! If that isn't the devil's own irony!"

For the moment, poor Conrad's S. O. S. lay forgotten along with the time-tables. Then, with sudden recollection of his father's message, as he turned the last page, Hardy folded the letter and hurried to the study door. His father, he perceived, as he leaned back in his easy chair with a certain effect of exhaustion in his relaxed limbs, had not failed to receive the sinister force of Park's various announcements.

"All right, Hardy." Charles Shannon greeted his son with reassuring cheerfulness. "Thank you. The letter you can just lay there on my desk. I'm a little tired now and am going to be wise enough to take a rest."

Hardy stood looking down into his father's face, a big wave of tenderness and concern rushing over him. He hesitated. It seemed wrong to be thinking of cutting short his stay at home just now,—brutal, fairly, to leave his father wounded and faint as he saw him at this moment! But Charles Shannon's sons had the habit of obedience to their father's orders. Furthermore, it was always his way to get off by himself when anything painful struck him. He had an instinct of self-protection from sympathy.

Hardy was spared further uncertainty, for his name was called and urgently from below. He stepped to

the study door. Amy, all unconscious that anything but her own love-story had place just then on the family stage, was exclaiming in peremptory staccato:

"Hardy Shannon! Do get a move on! Hurry down! You're wanted on the 'phone. Long distance! Do you hear?"

Closing the study door quietly, Hardy in a few seconds was at the telephone table, receiver in hand.

"Who is this?"

"Hardy Shannon?"

Certainly it was not Conrad's voice. A woman was speaking. But she addressed him in a singularly blunt, undecorated style, it seemed. He listened for the next question.

"Are you a friend of the Reverend Barton Conrad, one of our chaplains here in Camp D——?"

"I am. He is ill? In hospital?"

"Yes. Very ill. His pulse and temperature to-day don't suit the doctor at all."

"You are his nurse?"

"Yes."

"What is the trouble?"

This was ignored.

"We can't find out where his family are to be reached if we needed to send word. Not now. But it might happen."

"I can start to-night if I can be of any use."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that. Mr. Conrad keeps speaking your name. Even when he's asleep. We think he has some particular reason for wanting to see you."

"Is he suffering?"

"Yes. And he seems awfully worried. It may quiet him if you could come."

With this the speaker rang off, and Hardy was left to settle the conflicting calls of the moment as he could.

As was his habit he found chance for a few moments of conference with his mother. She admitted that Park's letter had been a nervous shock to his father, that she dreaded nervous shocks for him. But she had no apprehension of immediate trouble resulting, no definite illness, nothing to hold Hardy from responding to the call of Conrad's need.

"You go and tell Amy you must leave. I will pack your things," she admonished him in perfectly matter-of-fact fashion,—as if his relation to Amy were frankly understood between them, as if deep distress had not searched and found them both in the last few hours.

Amy was quite another proposition, Hardy admitted to himself, when he began explaining to her the fact that he was leaving in "just about fifteen minutes."

That he should, could or would, cut off one whole day and part of another,—besides this evening,—which they might have had together, just to go and see a friend who happened to be sick, was not in the least according to the canons of love-making as learned by Amy from the stories with which she was familiar,—her sole instructors thus far in the gentle art.

But she found, as she had found before in her young life, that when she was "up against" a decision of

Hardy Shannon's she might as well abandon hope. She abandoned it accordingly. Protest, however, was not so easily foregone. The few moments which were left them before Hardy departed were filled with her challenge, appeal and reproach, rendered with all the variations of ill-timed coquetry. All this was too unimportant to her cousin just then to be noticed very definitely, but he went out of the manse, kitbags in hand, his hard good-byes to his parents said, with a curious sensation as if an obstinate mosquito had been buzzing in his ears.

It was midnight when Hardy arrived at Camp D—— and encountered the formalities incident to his entrance as an officer from another camp coming in at such an hour.

The sense of urgency had grown upon him with every moment which followed his leaving home behind. What if Conrad, faithful old fellow, were in even more critical plight than the nurse had let him know? Her report of his condition—"not suiting the doctor"—might cover imminent danger. That he understood. . . . And to think of his friend as needing and longing in vain for his presence there among strangers in a camp hospital was sharply distressing.

Once inside the barriers Hardy hunted out a soldier on guard before certain official buildings. Of him he asked to be shown to the hospital where he should find the Reverend Barton Conrad.

The fellow stared at him sleepily at first under the

raw electric light which swung overhead, then, with suddenly quickened interest, asked:

"Oh, you mean our little lame Chappy?"

Hardy nodded.

"Well, sir, I guess you couldn't hardly see him. Not to-night, you know. Mr. Conrad is a pretty sick man they say."

"Yes. That is why I'm here. Will you show me how to find the hospital? There may be need of hurrying up, you see."

"Oh, then you're a doctor. Well, of course, that's different. Say, you'll do all you can for our Chappy all right, won't you? We fellows think a lot of him, I can tell you. Nice little minister."

With this the soldier eagerly undertook to direct Hardy along the gloomy and circuitous way which led to his desired end, a long, unlighted wooden building. All was silent and motionless here save for the sentry pacing before the gate set in a low paling.

XIII

THE FORGOTTEN WORD

A MOMENT later Hardy found himself standing alone in a long, dimly-lighted passage before a pine door half open into a chamber. Through the opening he could see within shapes, vague and indistinct, the light in the chamber being even less than that in the passage. There was a camp cot against the opposite wall and beside it stood a nurse in cap and apron. She turned now and stepped softly to the threshold where he stood. A clinical thermometer was in her hand.

"I believe I will not use it just now," she whispered, seeing Hardy standing there, but speaking to herself rather than to him. An exceedingly direct and practical person, he observed. "He is sleeping rather quietly now. It seems a pity to rouse him. I have just come on duty, but I know this is the first sleep he has had."

With this, perceiving as she apparently had not at first, that the khaki-clad figure was not that of a regular attendant or physician of the hospital, she came out into the passage, showing not the least surprise, however. Hardy followed on a few steps at her motion. Soon she stopped, glanced at the sign of his rank and remarked casually in an undertone:

"Then it is *Lieutenant* Hardy Shannon. I know now. The patient is no worse, I think."

"What is the matter with Mr. Conrad?" Hardy asked.

"Oh, the intermittent fever. There has been a great deal of it in camp. His case wouldn't be especially severe. We have higher temperatures often, but his constitution isn't strong. I suppose you may know that, being his friend."

Hardy returned brief assent.

"His heart is weak. What seems to be even more troublesome is that something worries him all the time, even when he is quite himself. Nobody knows what it is. I don't suppose he does himself, poor fellow. I am glad you could come,—right off so. He calls for you constantly when he is delirious."

"Can I stay there, in his room, the rest of the night?" Hardy asked gravely.

"Yes, if you will be perfectly still, and not let him know you are there, unless he should call for you—right on, steady,—as he does sometimes. That would be different, perhaps." She seemed to be questioning with herself.

"We can see how it works," Hardy commented. "You can depend upon me not to make my presence known without your leave."

"Very well."

With this the nurse led Hardy back into Conrad's chamber indicating a chair near the open window not in range of the sick man's sight as he lay stretched on his narrow bed. For almost an hour all was silent.

Hardy, sitting upright in his wooden-bottomed chair, began to grow drowsy, as also to take on a new sense of encouragement, seeing his friend at rest. But, as he noted two o'clock by his watch, held at a high angle to catch a ray from the electric night lamp, he observed uneasy, fitful movements of the slender figure on the bed. Broken words, moaned rather than pronounced, reached him where he sat. With sight and hearing strained, all inclination to sleepiness instantly gone,—Hardy sat at attention.

"Shannon. . . . Shannon. . . . Oh, Hardy Shannon. . . ."

Over and over came the name. Hardy's eyes filled with burning tears; his heart-beat grew faster and he clenched both hands hard in the struggle not to respond.

At that moment he saw that the nurse stood in the door motionless, watchful. Then suddenly, in a high, strange voice, Conrad called, "Where are my letters?" Again, with increased impatience, "Nurse, where are my letters?"

She was at the bedside before the last words were spoken.

"Why, they're right here, under your pillow, just where they always are," she said gently. "You know I wouldn't let them be put anywhere else. Trust me for that. Shall I give them to you?"

"Of course." The answer, though short and sharp, was piteously weary. "There," came the murmur, "that's better. I don't know what you girls take a man for. . . ."

The last words sank away into an indistinct mur-

mur. He was asleep again apparently. The nurse glided, shadow-like, from the room. At her motion Hardy rejoined her outside the door.

"These letters ——" she said.

"What are they?" he returned.

"Search me! They don't seem to be exactly love letters, and I don't know who wrote them. They're signed with just initials. Of course I tried not to read them. When he got so bad though and the doctor asked me to find where his family lived I had to open them trying to find a clue. There is a small package of them and from the first he has kept them under his pillow."

"Where are they written from?"

"Some from Peterboro. Some from Annisdale. I suppose they must be from some kind of a sweetheart, don't you know?"

"Very likely. How long do you suppose he will sleep now?"

"Oh, twenty minutes, perhaps."

The nurse went on to tell Hardy that in her opinion it could do no harm for him to sit nearer to the patient, speak to him, even, if he heard his own name called again; give him water and, in a general way, leave off the effort to conceal his presence or identity.

"Who knows what it will do for him?" she said thoughtfully, and again she flitted out of sight down the long passage.

Hardy, having obtained the permission he most wanted, now placed his chair at a point near the bed. Here he sat in the silence for half an hour, Conrad

as motionless as he. Then the restlessness and murmuring came again. Hardy laid a hand gently and firmly on the unquiet limbs. There was a sudden cessation of movement; stillness followed. This was repeated over and over. Sometimes Hardy spoke in answer to his name. To his surprise this did not rouse Conrad, but on the contrary seemed to act on him like a sleeping potion.

At dawn Hardy himself fell asleep as he sat to watch, leaning towards the bed, one hand on Conrad's wrist in which the racing pulse had slackened its beat. Suddenly he awoke, glanced up quickly and met Conrad's eyes fixed upon him. There was no hint of surprise; he was too weak for that, but his drawn, sharpened features seemed to relax to an expression of something like content.

"So you're here." He said nothing more just then. A little after, sleep fell upon them both. . . .

Coming in, as the summer daylight first streamed into the chamber, the nurse met Conrad's eyes big and dark. He was wide awake, his glance steady, sane. The curious vigilance of it, however, startled her.

Then, suddenly, she saw stretched along the floor beside the bed some object covered with an army blanket. As she bent to examine the strange figure Conrad caught her sleeve.

"Don't you touch him," he whispered weakly, but with decision. "That's my Buddy."

The nurse straightened up, looking her puzzled disapproval.

"That's my Buddy, I tell you," Conrad repeated, a

smile such as she had never seen before on his face. "He came to save me. . . . Like Jesus. . . ."

There was a silence in the bare little room then, a silence which was not tension but peace. Then Conrad turning on the pillow stretched out an arm and drew the army blanket a little straighter over Hardy Shannon's broad shoulders.

"See," he murmured. "He has nothing to rest his head on. . . . I couldn't manage. . . . He just tumbled down in his tracks . . . fell sound asleep. But, see there, I got that blanket over pretty well, didn't I? I took it off the bed foot there. No harm done?" This was asked with a shade of anxiety.

The nurse did not speak for a minute. Then she said, concisely: "No, there's no great harm done, but you see—this is against rules, Mr. Conrad. Or it would be . . ."

Conrad watched her. The mention of "rules" visibly disturbed him.

"You leave him be," he urged, returning to his boyhood vernacular. Then, after a glance of tenderness at the beauty of young, unwasted manhood in his friend's face, he once more lifted his eyes to the nurse. The pathos in their look made her turn instinctively away. He might catch sight of something in her eyes which did not belong there.

"He's above rules . . . that fellow is . . ." Conrad whispered. "He loves me, nurse." Then, coaxing, "Leave him be just a little while. . . . The boy is tired out."

On the following day Hardy wrote to Mary Minot that the doctors did not consider Conrad out of danger. The heart weakness continued a serious obstacle to his recovery. Her letters remained under Conrad's pillow, often held in his hand as if there were cure and consolation in the touch of them. Hardy could ask no question, but it was clear that the girl was heart's dearest to his friend. He dared not leave her ignorant of his danger.

A day followed in which, to Hardy's unprofessional view, Conrad made visible progress towards convalescence. The nurses and doctors were non-committal. "His is intermittent fever," they said; "that is the dickens of it. Time has got to tell."

Then came a telegram from Peterboro from Mary Minot. She would come to Camp D—— at once if Conrad wished to see her. This set everybody concerned in a quandary. With that weak heart,—who could tell what would be the effect upon the patient even of seeing the telegram, to say nothing of seeing the girl?

"Let me take care of this, will you?" Hardy Shannon asked.

"If you will take the responsibility," they told him.

He considered this for a few minutes steadily, then, straightening his shoulders and lifting his head, he declared he was ready to do even that. He supposed now, and with good reason, that Mary Minot was more than friend to Conrad. In his heart and that honestly, after a short, fierce struggle with himself,—himself in chains at that,—Hardy could say he hoped

that this was so. But he knew all the same that he must not dare take too much for granted.

Casually, in the late afternoon, as he sat beside Conrad, he remarked: "Wouldn't it be rather nice now, old fellow, if Miss Mary Minot could come here? I should like to see her. Wouldn't you rather like to see her yourself?"

Conrad glanced up at him. The shrewdness of the glance told Hardy that he couldn't depend upon any kind of camouflage. There was a short silence, in which Conrad seemed to fall a-musing.

"Why, no, Hardy," he said at last, a quaintly quizzical smile on his lips, "I don't think I want Mary Minot to come here now. I suppose you've been scaring her into some rash adventure or you wouldn't be asking the question."

"Well, you know, she is a pretty good friend of yours," Hardy replied, "and she really has a right to decide ——"

"My goodness!" Conrad broke in with sudden impatience. "Don't you go and let Mary Minot come all the way from Peterboro to see me in this shape! Have you got her outside there now all ready to spring on me?" Plainly he was alarmed.

"Steady on, my boy," laughed Hardy. "Miss Minot is in Peterboro as far as I know. I have nothing to spring on you whatever."

"Well, that's something to be thankful for anyway," was Conrad's expression of relief. "Why, man alive, can't you guess that when I see Mary Minot I want to make a good impression?—the best ever—

which isn't saying much. Do you think I'd let her see me with this raggedy stubble on my face and my nose pinched in so that it looks like a hawk's beak?"

Hardy relaxed. The release from a situation of painful perplexity was tremendous.

"You can see for yourself," Conrad went on, "that I'd lose the day. I don't flatter myself that I'm exactly a winner when I have on all my war paint and plumes, but as I am now—no sensible girl would look at me. You know it yourself."

They laughed a little together, an awkward possibility being evaded.

Two days passed. On the day next following Hardy's lengthened leave must expire. He was to start on this same evening for Plattsburg. Conrad had shown no symptoms of a return of the fever and each day he grew visibly stronger.

In the afternoon, his cot wheeled out on a broad upper veranda opening from the passage outside his door, he lay with head lifted on pillows and drank in with eager joy the beauty of the fleece-lined sky as he termed it. Hardy, in a camp chair, sat beside him. His pocket Bible was in his hand. He had been reading at Conrad's wish. Now they were silent together.

The silence was broken by the passing of a little group. A young soldier, recovering from a long illness, was led past them by his nurse and a comrade. They stopped for a moment.

"Hardy," Conrad spoke in a peculiarly impressive tone when they were left alone, "do you know that I have been in hell these last months?"

"It has been a tough time for you, old fellow, I know that well enough. But you seem such a lot better now."

"I don't mean my sickness. That is nothing. No—not that. It was the scorching of the flames my soul was in the midst of. I shall get well all right—now."

Hardy's hand closed over the weak, thin hand of his friend and rested there. He did not speak. Conrad took up the word again.

"You know how I was floundering there in the Seminary, before I knew you. When I first met you at Peterboro, Shannon, and for long afterwards, I was, as I am sure you know, in the throes of fierce spiritual struggle. For the faith with which I came to the Seminary I had lost. I know it may have been by my own fault. When I met you I saw, potentially, in the temper with which you had come, another tragedy more or less like my own. But before long I found that here was a faith and also a knowledge of divine things which did not flinch nor falter before any onslaught you met. Unlike my own. I watched you and I believed in you. That was clear gain for me.

"But still I couldn't win back my old belief. The Gospels had been resolved for me into a thing of shreds and patches,—here a scrap of genuine history, next to it legend, or some such—you know all about it. Still I came here as acting chaplain with the consoling idea that some people give you that when you get into Christian work your faith will come back.

"Well, Hardy, *mine didn't.* I can't explain it, but what little I had seemed to evaporate. But I went on.

I had no business to come here as a Christian, to minister to men, when I didn't believe myself. I knew it. But I went on all the same. I ministered to these poor fellows in sickness, in sin and trouble of all sorts, some of them dying. I held all the regular services—led in the repeating of the Apostles' Creed, not believing three words of it. Hardy, I even set forth Christ's death on the Cross as the world's salvation. Men, dying, would look at me with mortal solemnity and demand, 'Do you *believe* this? Do you believe my sins are forgiven for Christ's sake?' And I would assure them I did so believe when I did not. I simply believed that they were going out into the unknown—perhaps to annihilation, perhaps to retributive justice.

"Of course it couldn't go on. The sense grew heavier day by day upon me that I was guilty of fraud. Worse. That I was an utter hypocrite." A groan escaped Conrad's lips.

"We'll cut this out for the present," Hardy interposed. "Come!"

"No. We'll *have* it out. There isn't much more to tell you anyway. . . . I suppose I got a germ. Dear knows there were plenty of them flying around the camp. But the germ fell into the fire in me like oil into flame. So I've been burning up,—naturally would. . . . Then, that night, you came. I can never describe or account for it, but a word I had forgotten the use of, the meaning of, was made known to me then . . . before morning light. You just read it, there in that chapter of Isaiah: *Contrite*. In the way you came to me I suddenly *realized* how

Jesus came to sinful men, because He loved them . . . came to heal . . . to cure . . . to help them up . . . out of sin.

"My heart melted. There were tears for me at last, Hardy, instead of flames. *A broken and a contrite heart.* That was what I had. Jesus did not come to me as an example for me to try as far as is *not impossible,* to follow, but as a Saviour from sin, from the deepest sins of all. They had been mine—*unbelief, and sham Christianity.*"

For a little space neither man cared to speak. Then Conrad said quietly, a smile in the eyes he lifted to Hardy's face: "So I have found the Way at last."

XIV

MARY MINOT EXPRESSES HERSELF

IT was almost a year ago to a day, Hardy Shannon reflected, that he had first entered the great gate of the Peterboro Divinity School. He stood alone now within the Quadrangle, on the chapel steps. The place was very still.

He would wait until the noon hour struck and the classes broke up. Then he might look for his chance to waylay Professor Gregg. Of course, in the meantime, he should see some of the fellows he knew. But how empty it looked everywhere!

Twelve o'clock sounded and after the passing of certain immoderately long minutes, so they seemed to Hardy, a few men crossed from one hall to another. They had a singularly lonesome look to him. This, he supposed, came from his being accustomed to men by thousands in the training-camp. At last there was a man he knew,—Graves. Hardy hastened to join him. Their enthusiasm in meeting was out of all proportion to any intimacy existing between them. Times were different now. You couldn't afford to find any one uncongenial.

"Come along up to my room for a little while," cried Graves eagerly; "then we'll have luncheon together."

"Thanks, awfully," Hardy replied, "but I took a bite just now at the station when I came in town. I've got to hang around here now to see one or two of the fellows. Then I shall try to cover all Peterboro beyond the gates,—that is, every one I know,—during the afternoon and evening. Time is short."

"You leave to-night?" Graves asked the question with sober significance. "Are you on your way . . . ?"

"Not a bit of it. Man alive! Don't you understand that we know nothing in camp of when we go across or whether we ever do? I take the midnight train for New York, on my way home, to Melrose. Just have leave till to-morrow night. That's all."

"Oh, I see." Graves appeared slightly let down, having guessed that he was close to a first-hand war thrill. "You got a commission, I heard. Well, I can tell you, Shannon, this place is a deserted village now. We have had to begin with less than thirty students, you know."

"What, in all three classes together?"

"Yes. The war has made an awful difference. And instead of more coming in, the prospect is that more will go out. This *spurlos versenkt* business is a little too much to be borne, you know. I wish I could go. It's my eyes, you know, that keep me back. There's Professor Gregg coming out of Arnold Hall. Did you want to see him?"

Hardy's answer was to turn with a parting wave of the hand and cross the Quadrangle on a line to intercept the Professor. To meet him was another thing from

meeting Graves, glad as he had been to have that happen.

The touch of Gregg's hand, the illumination of the sudden smile on his care-lined face struck Hardy sharply. All disfavour and division of feeling between them seemed just then incredible. The old man urged the young one to come home with him then and there. They had much to talk over; he had missed Shannon curiously. April was a good while ago, you see. He spoke a little sadly of Dalrymple, his favourite student, now a missionary in India. A letter had come from him recently describing the havoc made in his work by the war.

They parted presently, Gregg having received Hardy's promise to come to 17 Locust Street for supper.

A few hours were spent by Hardy among such of his fellow-students as remained in the Seminary. Four o'clock found him marching at a good soldierly pace on a long avenue leading out into Peterboro's suburbs, the avenue on which the Peyton School was situated. This establishment having closed its doors, the building had been taken over just now by the Government as quarters for a company from its Radio School. Hardy noted with an irrepressible smile, devoid of merriment, the startling incongruity, as it seemed at first glance, of husky khaki-clad men moving here and there along the pensive, flower-bordered paths where he had been accustomed to see slender, girlish figures in rainbow-tinted muslin and silk.

In spite of himself Hardy stopped at the gate where

he and Mary Minot had stood long together on that February night when he had had sudden prescience of several things,—the war, but not the war only. They had had intimate mutual concern, he remembered, for Nancy Chance; he knew nothing in these days of her.

No one inside the barriers seemed to notice him. Perhaps his uniform made him safe from observation. He might never be so near Mary Minot again as he felt himself just here, felt with passionate pain. Then the sense of their divided ways sprang up to order him off that forbidden ground.

The figure of Conrad, restored now to health, restored to faith, strong in the joy of his new hold on the things of the spirit, came before him. . . . For nothing in the world would he traverse Conrad's hope of winning Mary's heart. . . . And there was his own relation of plighted lover to Amy.

Pulling himself up with physical energy and away from that point of secret danger, Hardy hastened on his way to keep a four o'clock appointment to visit Elinor Dane. As he turned into the quiet cross street in which stood the house of her sister, Mrs. Eliot, he perceived a group of persons leaving the very house to which he was bound, and advancing in his direction. At second glance he perceived that the two children in this group were Elinor Dane's small nephew and niece. That was unimportant. The girlish figure between them, with a hand given to either child, was strangely, incredibly like Mary Minot. Another minute and he knew that it was Mary herself. He had supposed her to be in Boston, doing war work. So much he had

gathered from occasional tidings reaching him through Conrad.

When they met Mary's face wore a brighter bloom than he remembered and, instead of reflecting his own surprise in their encounter, she was smiling merrily. As she gave him her hand she cried:

"It is your turn now! I am hurrying off to leave you Miss Dane all to yourself."

Hardy, really puzzled, as he had not known of any but a most casual acquaintance between Mary and Elinor Dane, turned and walked back along the avenue by her side, the children following gaily.

"Then you know Miss Dane rather well, I take it," he commented. "Also, you are not in Boston."

"Boston? Why should I be?" Then, blushing a rosier red as she recalled a chance allusion in her correspondence with Conrad, Mary added: "Oh, yes, I did have a chance to do some war work in Boston a month or more ago, but I couldn't get away from Peterboro. There is really a lot to do here."

A dozen eager questions, hurrying over each other to find voice, reduced Hardy to silence. Mary suddenly stood still.

"You really ought to be headed the other way, Mr. Shannon. Miss Dane is expecting you, and, I think, rather eagerly, too. And it is hard on an invalid to be kept waiting." With which Mary held up her watch with a smile.

All that was said or done, as Hardy afterwards reflected, was nothing, less than nothing. And yet the brief time between Mary's emerging from Miss Dane's

dwelling and the moment when he found himself standing alone before that same closed door, his finger on the bell, seemed touched by a sense of something celestial. This much of brief joy he could not ward off.

Hardy sat down presently in a daintily appointed second-story room facing Elinor Dane's sofa. An exclamation of irrepressible wonder escaped him. When he had made pastoral visits in this house during the previous winter he had found Miss Dane in an almost helpless condition. She then had been confined to her bed in a large, but confused and cheerless chamber, with several small children pursuing varied activities around her. She was acting, in short, as a recumbent nursery governess to the children of her sister, Mrs. Eliot, who, perforce, was spending the major part of her days within the walls of a distant High School. At that time, while he had reverenced Miss Dane's cheerful and uncomplaining obedience to the requirements of her situation, he had rebelled in silence with youthful intensity at the spectacle of this woman, so distinguished by charm, as well as by her attainments and her genius, thus reduced to desuetude or to trivial service.

What had happened?

"Yes," responded Elinor Dane with a smile of quiet enjoyment in his surprise. "Look about you if you would see her monument!"

And Hardy looked. Miss Dane,—fragile, graceful, daintily-dressed, had no longer the air of a helpless sufferer. Not only was the dull room exchanged for this "Bower effect" as he inwardly styled it, and bed

exchanged for sofa, but the lady sat among her cushions in the alert attitude of one ready for action. She was surrounded by books and papers, and in her face and frame he recognized the power to do and to accomplish.

"Whose monument?" he asked soberly. "You look, on your own part, ready to attack, instead of expecting—and not resisting—attack."

"I am," she said. "I attack quite a bit of war work," and she pointed to the baskets, "in my own way. But that is the least of my triumphs. Whose monument?" she repeated his question with a quizzical smile.

"Yes."

"Can't you imagine? You must have met her just now."

Hardy steadied his gaze as it met Miss Dane's. She must not guess what he dared not guess himself.

"You must mean Miss Minot," he remarked as casually as he might.

Elinor Dane nodded. Her glance had grown gentle. She pointed to a photograph of Mary on the mantel above her sofa. Hardy rose and took it in his hand.

"Shall I tell you the story?" she asked.

"Yes. In three volumes, if possible. We are all waiting anxiously for your next novel."

"You are going to have it, too, and before very long." As she said this Elinor Dane put out her hand to a closed morocco case on a low stand near by, opened it and revealed a bulky typewritten manuscript.

"Ah! you have an amanuensis!" cried Hardy.

"This is as it should be," and he glanced at the photograph in his hand.

"But you do not know at what price I have obtained this freedom! My one fear is that the price is too great. I will give you only a short story this time, but if I were to tell all, three volumes would be inadequate. You remember that last winter I could hardly use my hands and arms at all? My trouble is yielding, but I am not able yet to write more than a few words at a time. Naturally the typewriter is impossible."

"I should think so."

"But it won't be always. I believe now that I shall recover completely. But that is another story. You can lay that picture here if you want to get rid of it," and Elinor Dane touched the morocco case, now closed.

"Thank you. I am not particularly anxious to get rid of it." As he spoke Hardy wondered idly what had become of the photograph of himself in uniform which he had sent Miss Dane not long since.

"Showing good taste," was the response. "Very well. To go back to last winter. Mary Minot came to see me one day, sent by you, my good friend. I was in the other room. You remember it? The children had the floor as usual. It was a bit thick and I was rather wretched. Mary is of a gentle spirit. You would not call her officious or pushing, I think?"

"No. I don't know that I would." Again Hardy glanced furtively at the photograph in his hand.

"The worst of my troubles really, at that time, was a double one; I wanted money awfully and I wanted

to write a book. The firm who published *The Stars in their Courses* were begging for me. I had the book in my head, I could see it and hear it, I ate it, drank it, slept it, dreamed it. It possessed me day and night. But I could put scarcely a word of it down on paper, and the dammed urge of it,—don't look surprised, I spell it with two *m's*,—was fairly driving me into a fever. By the clinical thermometer it was quite.

"Well, while being neither a meddlesome nor a pushing person, this artless child forced from me the tale of my double distress. I tried to turn her aside and talk of her own literary doings,—she writes very well as you must know. This was on the occasion of her second visit, I think. With that I seemed to pull out a stop which let loose a force of conviction of which I had not dreamed in one so young, so fair, so demure. —Don't hesitate to look at the picture, Mr. Shannon. It is my own favourite recreation.—Briefly, Mary Minot, being 'fed-up' with the popular craze for 'self-expression,' was in vehement revolt from it as vanity and vexation of spirit. She declared that among twenty or more young people she knew, herself one of them, who were all bent on 'self-expression' along various lines, there was not one who, as she believed, really had anything to express of any particular consequence.

"This sounds severe for Mary Minot, and she was rather severe. But her severity was directed, in the main, to herself. She denounced as nonsense the idea that she had anything to say which had not been better said a hundred times; declared roundly that the tap-

root of her expression-seeking was 'the eternal ego,' and assured me that she had given it up. I urged her to keep on and sincerely, for she certainly has it in her. But she is firm in her quiet way, I find, and all the satisfaction I could win was that, when she had lived long enough to have something worth expressing, she might try again."

"That was a sensible decision, I am sure," commented Hardy rising to replace Mary's photograph on the mantel. "Do go on, Miss Dane."

"Do I need to? As I said in the beginning, Look around you if you would see her monument. Mr. Shannon, Mary Minot simply takes *me* as her channel of self-expression! Her position is that I, older and maturer in experience and in command of technique, have ready a piece of work which may be of a certain importance. She asks as a 'privilege,'—that is the way she puts it,—that she be allowed to become the medium through which I work. She is writing at my dictation. She has all the equipment for it, understands short-hand, typewriting, everything. And such a gleeful creature! Why, if I hadn't had an idea in my head I should have been inspired simply by having such a delicious, buoyant, radiant presence about me."

Elinor Dane stopped speaking and Hardy, fearing to let her grow tired, made as if to go. This she forbade.

"Not quite yet, please. It is not only that Mary is doing all this hard work for me and will not receive a penny in payment, but she has reorganized the whole *mise en scène* here for me. You know Mrs. Eliot, my

dear sister, is a widow and is working herself to the bone to keep a home and bring up her children. When I was teaching in Revere I could help her a little, besides taking care of myself. Now I have had to invade her household. And my savings are practically exhausted. My sorrow's crown had been that I am by way of adding to my sister's burdens. The least I could do was to care for the children in my miserably feeble way certain hours of the afternoon in her absence. You know how it used to be. Now my Mary hypnotizes those lambs into the happiest kind of quiet occupations while we work, and then takes them out in the park or somewhere to let them grow rosy. Was anything ever like that girl? How can I reward such goodness, such devotion?"

"Let her write your book, Miss Dane," Hardy replied with emphasis. "That is reward enough for Mary. . . ." There he stopped confused by his own involuntary mention of her name, and rising, this time in earnest to go. He looked down gravely into Elinor Dane's face, her hand in his.

"You look as if you cared . . . for Mary," she said, very low.

"I do care. Can I help it? But I have no right. It is highly probable that I shall never see her again."

For a moment their glances met and gripped. Elinor Dane smiled, a musing smile of self-counselling, then released his hand.

"You are sailing . . . soon?"

"Very soon, unless all signs fail. I shall not see you again until the war is over. . . . Good-bye.

Don't fail to write your book. You are needed." He moved to the door.

"You are young, Hardy Shannon . . . so very young you are, to me. All that seems final now may show as merely provisional by and by. Give time a chance. . . . Perhaps I should not mention it, but Mary Minot has the photograph you were so good as to send me. . . . I fancied her eyes wandered in that direction rather more than she liked to let them. So, the other day, I loaned it to her. . . ." Miss Dane's glance was lifted to the mantel, her smile provocative.

"Thank you."

Hardy crossed the room and in perfectly composed fashion removed the photograph of Mary Minot from its place once more, folded it carefully in the sheet of paper which a motion of Elinor Dane's hand indicated. Having slipped it into his pocket, he bowed his thanks and his farewell and departed.

XV

THE MARIONETTES

IN the business centre of the city, a half hour later, Hardy encountered Dr. Chance who insisted that he go home with him to dinner. Hardy declined to break his engagement with Professor Gregg, but agreed to spend his last hours in Peterboro at the Chances. They stood as they spoke together in front of the old business block in which the Mortals had had their rooms. Hardy wanted to ask if the members were scattered now and the quarters closed, but instinctively forbore.

Dr. Chance's face showed the characteristic war-strain so common that year; his manner was nervous, his eye restless. Nancy, he said, was with one of the American medical units in the Chemin des Dames region. He was anxious about her, plainly, said they almost never heard from her. The self-satisfied, prosperous and authoritative pastor positively now seemed to cling to his erstwhile assistant. Vaguely Hardy felt that Chance's outer cloak of suavity, which he had fancied impervious, was wearing a little threadbare.

Arrived at 17 Locust Street the door, to Hardy's surprise, was opened to him by one of the marionettes, as he had been used to dub the Gregg twins. It was Dorothy, usually known as Dame. She was still

young and flippant, also much curled and powdered, short as to her skirts and gauzy as to her stockings.

With enthusiasm she received "Lieutenant Shannon," ushered him into the unaltered parlour and began outpouring upon him an emphatic and staccato monologue.

Grandfather would be in in a very few minutes. He was so awfully sorry to be just a tiny bit late, but there had been a special faculty meeting called which he did not know about in the morning. If it had been anything else Grandfather would have stayed away just for once, you know, but he really *had* to be there because the business was about calling this new teacher to assist in his department, this man from somewhere out west. Lieutenant Shannon would know his name, of course. She wasn't quite sure, Dearing or Fearing she believed. Or it might be Searing. Anyway Grandfather was getting,—why, of course, not old at all, you couldn't say that, but he really ought to be relieved of some of his work and there was this chance, if they acted promptly, to secure this *very* remarkable Greek scholar. Greek she thought it was. Of course, it might be Hebrew. Something about the Bible anyway.

Oh, yes, she was staying here in Locust Street altogether now. He would know, of course, of her mother's having gone, two months ago, to France. No? Then he must have been surprised at finding her here. Their own house was closed entirely. Horrid, wasn't it, for her? Words would fail to say how dull Peterboro had grown. Of course, she kept up her

lessons. But once in a while she had stunts to do for the boys in the Radio School or the Aviation camp. That was fun, only it was so hard to do them without Pyth. She missed him awfully. She was going out to dance for the Radio boys to-night. They were to send a taxi for her from the Hostess' House.

Pyth,—Lieutenant Shannon knew, of course, that she and Walter called each other Dame and Pyth,—was an aviator now. She didn't know exactly where. He was with the British troops and she supposed they were somewhere in Flanders. Yes, it was perfectly frightful being separated like this. She was just crazy herself to go overseas too, and she thought it was a burning shame that she couldn't. But Father and Mother agreed—and, of course, they hardly ever did agree on anything, but they did about this,—that she really was too young (Shannon was left to add for himself several other *too's*) to go across yet. But if the war lasted another year . . .

Lieutenant Shannon knew Miss Chance so well, he would understand how fearfully they all must miss her. She was the life of everything. The Mortals had just gone to pieces and poor Dr. Chance looked precisely like a Death's-Head-and-Cross-Bones. Everybody noticed it! Papa was the only Peterboro person who was lucky enough in these days to see anything of Mischance, as some of them used to call her. Wasn't it perfectly lovely that they could work in the same hospital? . . .

At this point, to Hardy's relief, Professor Gregg's voice was heard in the hall. The scene changed to the

dining-room and conversation succeeded to Dorothy's characteristic monologue.

Hardy greeted Kate, the Greggs' old servant, with unaffected cordiality and had time to learn that her mistress was "pretty well for her," although not quite able to come down-stairs. She was very anxious to see Mr. Shannon; he was to go up as soon as supper was over. As they rose from the table the Professor was called to the telephone. Returning to the hall, where Hardy stood waiting to be conducted by him to Mrs. Gregg's chamber, his face wore a slightly puzzled look.

"I seem to be fated to interruptions, Shannon," he remarked. "That faculty meeting broke up the time before supper. Now Judge Sawyer telephones that I am wanted down at the Federal Building, the offices of the Government here now during the war. I cannot think why they should want me there. The Judge called off in a hurry, simply urged me to come as soon as convenient. I do not suppose that I shall be kept there long."

"Very well, sir," replied Hardy. "I should think you might be a little tired yourself by this time, but, apart from that, it is all right. Mrs. Gregg and I have a lot of things to talk over and by the time I have tired her out you will be back, and we shall have still a couple of hours. I don't plan to leave you until half-past ten, you know, if you can stand me as long. I have only one more visit to make."

Hardy, as he took the armchair drawn up by Mrs. Gregg's couch for him, heard the house door close on

its master. Immediately, as if a button had been pressed by automatic action, the sound of jazz music, played with merciless emphasis on the tinkling old piano, was heard from the parlour.

"Dorothy likes it," Mrs. Gregg remarked smiling indulgently. "And I don't mind it,—not often. But Mr. Gregg finds it so annoying that we have prevailed upon Dorothy not to play when he is at home. Poor child! It is so dull for her here with only us old fogies. She misses her mate I think very keenly."

They talked then of many things; of Hardy's experiences and prospects, his hopes for return to Peterboro at some not too distant day; of Mrs. Gregg's health, the calling of an assistant to her husband's Seminary department. Through it all Mrs. Gregg seemed, as she always seemed to Hardy, sensible, evenly balanced, wholesome,—possessed of an influence in the higher things of life even stronger, he sometimes thought, by reason of her detachment from its practical claims and urgencies.

Hardy loved Mrs. Gregg, loved the quite matter-of-course way she had taken on of calling him by his first name. The bright, frank look in her eyes, the blithesomeness of her spirit, her indomitable courage, humour and keen intellectual appreciations, never failed to delight him. For this reason he was quick to-night to feel that a cloud was resting upon her. There were, to be sure, in these days, many possible causes for such a thing, but he found himself wondering if he was here, as so often now, in touch with some immediate reflex of the war's ravages. He was not long left in

doubt; for it was soon manifest that Mrs. Gregg definitely desired to confide in him.

"Germany will be the death of us all, I sometimes think, Hardy," she said with a small, piteous smile. "You know we lost our faith and my health over there, way back, when we were young. But that is an old story. It is not generally put so baldly either. But that is the gist of it. Well, now I am afraid this Teutonic War is going to break up, or finish breaking up, Hugh's family life."

Hardy looked his quick concern. He did not speak. That was for her to do. She took a letter from the desk at the head of her couch and held it in her hand as she continued:

"You know that Hugh is doing a really remarkable work over there in a hospital somewhere near the Aisne. He is strong and skilful and he is capable of heroic action along the line of his profession. I have very little doubt that honours will come his way. Indeed they have already. You know Nancy Chance. I have always loved the girl. She has been endlessly good to me. I believe in her."

"So do I!" exclaimed Hardy stoutly.

"Of course you do. But Lydia, Hugh's wife, chooses not to. Nancy went out with other nurses at the same time, on the same ship, with Hugh's unit. They have worked together in the months since, as why should they not? It seems strange that in the midst of agony such as is rending the life of nations and men there can still be room left for petty personal suspicions and jealousies."

Mrs. Gregg sighed as she paused and opened the letter in her hand.

"Perhaps you will wonder why I am troubling you with matters so intimate and, in a way, so far from your own interests. I tell you, Hardy, I have a feeling that it is possible that you may be able to do something, knowing them both as you do. At least, before you go across I want you to know of the situation,—if it is a 'situation.' The first suggestion has come to me this week in this letter from Lydia. It may or it may not be worth noticing. It is a most unusual thing for her to write to me, you see. However, as she left Dorothy with us she has reason enough for doing so now. And her ostensible object in writing is to impress upon us that, no matter what may happen, Dorothy must not be allowed to come over seas. It is no place for a girl like her to be on her own responsibility and Lydia makes it very emphatic that under no circumstances can she have Dorothy with her."

"What is Mrs. Gregg doing over there?" asked Hardy.

"She is in the south of France at a point to which they send invalided officers, British and American both. I do not know what she does,—something by way of entertainment. Something also in which she apparently considers that Dorothy's presence would be an interruption. I don't know. Lydia is always puzzling to me. I can't help fearing . . . But let me read you a little of her letter.

"'I have not seen Hugh since the day I landed at Boulogne,'" Mrs. Gregg read. "'He professed to be

unable to leave the hospital for more than that day. It appeared equally impossible for me to go back there with him, or even to find a place in the neighbourhood where I could be useful. In fact, I thought him rather surprisingly pleased at the prospect of getting me off to the Midi as fast as possible.

"'Of course it must be known generally in Peterboro that Nancy Chance is his especial surgical nurse. They go about together and work together constantly. I hear some rather surprising tales of their performances. You can imagine such things do not make me very happy. I have never had a high opinion of Nancy Chance. She is a girl who could be carried completely off her feet by a man's admiration, never having had enough of it to accept it as matter of course. As for Hugh, I suppose neither you nor his father would claim that he would let any moral scruple stand in the way for a moment of a thing he wanted.'"

Some one came in below. Hardy stepped to the landing.

"Is it you, Professor Gregg?" he called down into the dimly lighted hall.

"Yes. Come down, Shannon, if you will. I am rather tired, had to walk all the way back. You'll find me in the study."

Hardy returned to meet Mrs. Shannon's ready smile of acquiescence.

"It is quite time for you to go. You have heard enough. Probably there will be no chance for you to do anything. But it comforts me to have you know." Then, as he bent and took her hand in his, she added,

her eyes misty with tears, "God bless you and preserve you, dear Hardy Shannon, and bring you safely back to us, all troubles over. Now," with her quick, infectious laugh, "go down and brighten the corner for my husband. That is your occupation in Peterboro to-day, I judge. He knows nothing of this ——" and she pushed the letter out of sight in the desk.

Hardy found Professor Gregg in his old place by the study hearth, the same shabby easy chairs drawn up before the fire. His unusual attitude gave the young man sudden prescience of fresh trouble. He was leaning forward, both elbows propped on his knees, his chin between his hands, staring into the fire. He did not turn nor look up until Hardy had seated himself. Then, relaxing and leaning back in his chair, he spoke in an undertone, his lips quivering slightly.

"There was a cable from Headquarters in Flanders down there at the Government office for me. The lad, Walter, you know, Hugh's boy, was instantly killed in an aviation accident yesterday. We will not let my wife know to-night, nor Dorothy. . . . Poor little girl."

The two sat together in the dusky fire-lighted room for an hour and over. They scarcely spoke for a time, and throughout the hour little speech passed between them. But Hardy knew that his presence in some undefined way comforted the old Professor. It was something to remember with gratitude and tenderness that

even so small service as this of silence was in his power to render at such a moment.

"I may never see you again," the Professor said, when they parted. "The shadows gather but until night comes we can both thank God if we can work. . . . I should be glad to know that I have not done you any harm, Shannon."

With a hard wrung word Hardy was off and out into the night.

XVI

TWO LETTERS

FROM Reverend Barton Conrad to Lieutenant Hardy Shannon:

"Office of *The Christian Standard*,
New York City, November 7, 1918.

"DEAR HARDY:

"Hurrah for our boys! Only complete surrender can follow your tremendous advance above Verdun joined to the onward sweep of the French and British forces. The end is in sight! Does this really mean that the Allies have *won* the war which-is-to-end-war? We are almost off our heads over here with the thrill of this as *possible*.

"I am thinking continually, not only of you, my boy, but of the family in the Melrose manse. These days of victory, hard fought, must be days of sharp suspense for your father and mother. I ran out to Melrose the other day and had a visit with them. Your mother told me of Park's surprising marriage. Ill-starred that, it would seem, but, in this as in all respects, your father and mother are true sports. Of course you know that your father has an assistant pastor, young Jacobs. Your charming sister, or near-sister, Amy was at home. I being of common clay, and she being irresistible, we'd a small, innocuous flirtation.

"You will be surprised at this letter-head and I must give you briefly my official report. As you know, after I got on my feet again, I held on to my job in Training Camp until April. After that I went home to Vermont where in June I was ordained to the ministry.

The day's exercise was a very beautiful experience for me because of what it meant to my family as much as to myself. My dear old father and mother have never had to guess, Shannon, how near I came to renouncing the ministry by reason of unbelief. You know all about it.

"Professor Gregg was good enough to take the journey up to Halsey for the ordination. Very decent of him, wasn't it, considering my recalcitrancy? He preached the sermon. It was positively pietistic. Our simple country folk took him for express exemplar of the venerable, devotedly pious scholar and parson of other days,—the sort who 'allur'd to brighter worlds and led the way.'

"I think he is much disturbed as to the prospect for the Seminary. There are very few students left now, and there seems little chance of any marked increase in numbers for the coming year. Naturally nothing was said as regards the present startling spread of the Modernist spirit of un-faith through the churches at large, laity as well as ministry, nor of its influence in turning men away from theology. Gregg puts it all on the war. He says little now of Germany, but I think he has come to the point of admitting her guilt. You and I must always see behind this guilt the undermining of the nation's integrity, political as well as moral, by the deep damnation of religious disloyalty.

"I, with all the world, am wondering how much longer now it will take to close things up over there,—how long before our men will be coming home. I should hate to say how eager I am to see you. You will be interested in what I am doing here in New York. It does not mean that I do not hope to take a pastorate later. But, as you will see, for the present I have a job on this religious paper. It is not brilliant in influence or income but suffices for the needs of a modest

bachelor,—the 'little, lame chap' as the fellows in camp, you remember, used to call me. Hawkes, you know, is Editor-in-chief here. My coming on the paper was the result of things I had been writing for the press off and on while I was still in Camp D——. You will guess that they had to do with the progress of religious thought.

"I am far from losing sight of our mutual pledge for Defence on the one hand, Resistance on the other. The dropping down among us over here, since the war is on, of moral restraints and reticences must admonish any thinking man of the desperate need for renewed emphasis upon the Christian religion and its ethical implications. One can hardly help wondering what connection there may be in America, such as we recognize plainly in Germany, between the decay of a controlling religion and the decay of social standards. However that may be, you must be prepared for startling changes when you come home. They ramify in all directions.

"I shall send you to-day Miss Elinor Dane's new novel, *A Soul in Arms*. It is the first piece of American fiction having to do with the war which has elements of greatness. I wonder if you know the secret of its making. It is not my part to tell you if you don't. But the book is worth all it has cost to create. If it reaches you I can think how you will enjoy it. I am also sending you a copy of *The Standard*, little likely as it is to find you. It has an editorial of mine, with the heading *What is the effect of the new Rationalism on Christian Missions?*

"I hear from Miss Minot occasionally. She is still in Peterboro hard at work.

"Yours,

"CONRAD."

From Captain Hardy Shannon to Reverend Barton Conrad:

"Coblenz, December 18, 1918.

"DEAR OLD CONRAD:

"Glad of your letter written just before the Armistice. I am watching impatiently for the coming of the *Standard* and Elinor Dane's new book. Thanks for both. Yes, from Miss Dane herself I have had the story of Mary Minot's choice of a channel for expression. Sanctified common sense I call that scheme of hers. It wouldn't be bad if a lot of scribblers would get rid of the obsession of self-expressing. Mary Minot will have something of her own worth expressing later, I am confident, but it will be none the worse for maturing.

"Things have moved rapidly. Our regiment was rushed here ten days ago, at German request, to hold down disorder. This may be old enough news to you, but we haven't got used to the volte-face yet. It is too soon to record impressions of our hosts, but I have a tentative one which I am unable to resist, to wit, that they are only too kind! Nothing is good enough for our fellows. We must have everything we like and in inordinate measure. In particular, wine, women, song. This over-camaraderie conveys 'sad satiety' to some of us.

"By the way, I am walking the dizzy heights of the captaincy now. Since Ancreville. Stand at attention, please! I can't see any reason for it myself; a case of mistaken identity most likely. But I realize it will please the folks at home.

"I haven't the ghost of an idea when we shall get home. My hope is that I tarry not more than six months in Coblenz. Yesterday I took a Rhine steamer down to Cologne to look up Jim Perley, an English

fellow I have sworn an eternal friendship with. You know the English have invested Cologne as we have Coblenz. I only got there by especial pull of my Colonel. Be sure you don't fail to read Pershing's Proclamation to the citizen folk of Trêves. You know his headquarters are there. It is a magnificent soldierly bit,—human but inexorable.

"I had a glorious afternoon in Cologne but missed Perley. It didn't matter for I had the Dom all to myself,—no interruptions. It is more impressive than I even dreamed of,—the first really great Cathedral I have seen except Notre Dame. When I came away I had a lot of fun browsing among the quaint little shops in the streets behind the Dom. A good old duffer in a musty second-hand bookshop made me sit down and rest. He observed that I walk a little lame, nothing much, a mere surface wound, pretty well healed, but tiresome at times.

"After a while I got rid of my host. He was bent on magnifying his office when he found that I was *echt Amerikanisch.* Then I had a chance to dig into his stock. I never saw such a number of really very ancient books brought together. Mostly they were without interest except as antiques, but I did come across one small leather-bound volume which I bore away with me. It is badly battered and bruised; the pages stained a dirty yellow by time and neglect; the print abominably crabbed. The date is 1793. The title is what caught my eye: *Johann Salomo Semler, 1725–1791. Der Vater des Deutschen Rationalismus.*

"You have probably made this conspicuous pioneer's acquaintance long ago, and I can fairly see the eagerness with which, when I return, you will try to get my little treasure away from me. It is mighty interesting reading though difficult. I assure you scholars in that day did not wince as ours do at the term Rationalist!

They appear, at least my ancient scribe does, to glory in it. But, Conrad, the odd thing about the book, as I go through it, is that I am constantly reminded of Professor Gregg. There is the same paradox in Semler as in him,—the private personal piety of the man running parallel with his public occupation of assailing the integrity of the Bible, of Inspiration, of the Christian Faith, reducing everything to a purely human and naturalistic level.

"This poor old Johann Salomo Semler seems, in the end, to have died embittered and broken-hearted by the extremes to which his teaching led his disciples. For he had a tremendous following, according to Henke, my author, during the last three decades of the eighteenth century. Is here the 'mortal taste' which has 'brought death into the world, and all our woe'?

"I wonder how Douglas Gregg rates this man Semler. I shall show you the book and see what you think of it when I bring it home. . . . On the whole, for safety's sake, I believe I shall send it home in a package of trophies I have picked up, which is going next week. I feel that I can spare it! It has not become my daily food, as yet!

"All this and not a word yet *re* your newspaper work. It is all right, Conrad, if you can keep out of controversy. Nothing good, it seems to me, comes of that. I'm glad you still mean to take a pastorate. Meanwhile I know what good literary work you will be doing. Au revoir—I would say it in a dozen different languages if it could speed the day.

"Yours,

"HARDY SHANNON."

XVII

PARK SHANNON

CHARLES SHANNON'S older son stood in the oriel window of his father's study overlooking the long south wall of the Stone Church. It was a bleak March morning. He was not conscious of seeing the church. He was conscious only of that motionless low-breathing figure in the chamber on the far side of the house, that death-in-life which had been his father. The first sight of it an hour ago had moved him more than he had thought possible.

Nine years were long to remain away from home. A curious stirring at his heart had already convinced Park Shannon that this, just this entourage, this atmosphere, was after all his true home. Not Berlin, nor Leipsic nor any other. Perhaps it had not been wholly wise to remain away so many as nine years. Certainly not if a man contemplated taking up life again over here. But that was not subject for consideration to-day, if ever. Agatha would not fit in such a place as this.

Park Shannon turned abruptly and crossed to his father's desk. Something held him back from drawing out the armchair and seating himself there. And yet it was at his mother's request that he had come to

the study, and she had bade him use the desk as if it were his own. And the letters which must be written, —they were in his father's interests . . . if one could think of interests in connection with that unconscious figure in the other room.

It would have been easier but for that look in his mother's face just now when she brought him here, when she left him. She had smiled, but the heartbreak in her smile . . . How bravely it was commanded. . . . She was never one to let herself go, which was part of being a thoroughbred, it occurred to her son. He had not companied with just that strain in recent years, had even forgotten . . . what was it? . . . the tradition? Yes, that was the word. How it had come back last night when he reached the house and met his mother's welcome! . . . come back as something, after all, extraordinarily precious. But underneath lay the disquieting sense that, in reality, he was not precisely in the picture, that now, by his own choice, he walked another way. And still it was to him that his mother had cabled. Not to Hardy. He was her first born. Also he believed himself first in his father's affections. It was true that Hardy could not have come in answer to the summons had it been sent, but that was beside the mark. He, the elder son, was summoned, was here.

There was a deep leather-covered chair in the oriel's embrasure. Park Shannon threw himself into it. A few books, a magazine or two lay in the window-seat. Plainly they lay as they had been left and not very long ago. He glanced at a title or two mechanically.

Jesus and the Gospels, The Christ We Forget. . . . No, obviously he did not belong here as once he had belonged. The day for that was done. His mother had thought him changed. Naturally nine years would make a difference. He was hardly more than a boy when he went to Germany. Did she divine the entirety of the change?

As he appeared to-day Park Shannon, a man of thirty-odd, had lost the look of youth, but had not lost a certain resemblance to his brother Hardy, although his colouring was darker and the lower part of the face was concealed by the full, dark beard, worn German fashion. His frame was shorter and heavier than Hardy's, lacking altogether in his brother's athletic grace. The sag of a sedentary mode of life was observable in all his lines,—plainly Park was an indoors man. In his face, especially in his eyes, could be discerned a dimming of the youthful freshness and clarity noticeable in Hardy's face, the effect which follows perpetual steeping in fumes of beer and tobacco. Obscurely, since the mouth was hidden, a latent cynicism as well as something of hard and derisive challenge in the man's facial expression could be felt more easily than described.

Amy Shannon had been called home from her boarding-school when this, the third stroke, had smitten Charles Shannon. The cable summons had gone to Park earlier. Amy had seen Park only at breakfast that morning, he having reached Melrose after midnight of the preceding night.

As Mrs. Shannon, leaving Park behind, came alone

from the study, Amy, lying in wait, caught her with an arm around her neck and whispered:

"How he has changed! How different he is from Hardy! Oh, you poor love, if only you could have had Hardy now!"

"Don't, Amy," Mrs. Shannon murmured, her face contracting as if she received a physical blow. "Park is very kind . . . so tender and loving. . . ."

But, as she went her way back to her husband's bedside, to watch for one more glance of recognition from his eyes, Rachel Shannon must needs force herself anew to put out of her thoughts the knowledge that this hour of impending death had come as the inevitable sequence of the blow dealt his father by Park's letter from Zurich more than a year before, with its declaration of disseverance.

A week passed. The end came not swiftly, but stealthily. There was no moment of consciousness for Charles Shannon. And now the funeral was over; the manse restored to wonted order, the last house guests sped on their way, among them Barton Conrad who had ministered to the grieving family and church. At last Mrs. Shannon was at liberty to go away by herself, to close her chamber door, for a while, against interruption.

In the library this morning Amy was receiving a visit from Mr. Jacobs, for nearly a year now pastor's assistant of the Stone Church. He was a sober-minded, suitable young man, but one so lacking in personal emphasis that even Amy had found in him no

pegs on which to drape her romantic instincts. Perhaps it was by reason of this neutrality of mind towards the visitor that she suddenly recognized the propriety of including Park in the ceremony.

Excusing herself for a moment Amy flew up the stairs and tapped softly on the study door. Park by this time had overcome his scruples and was by way of making himself wholly at ease and at home at his father's desk. One could always find him in the study. He seemed scarcely to take a walk even. The door was opened promptly by Park, also softly. He was very sensitive just now to his mother's need of rest.

"What is it?" he asked in a curt whisper, pen in hand.

"Oh, Park, won't you come down and help me?" Amy was confused, uncertain now as to the validity of her claim. Park always intimidated her. "Mr. Jacobs is calling. You have met him, you know,—Papa's assistant?"

"Did he ask for me?"

"No, not exactly, but I am sure he is going to. I had to ask him to excuse Mamma, you see."

"Certainly I will come down."

Rather to Amy's surprise her cousin, dropping his pen and pushing the door to a point at which it could not swing shut, took her hand in his and walked in silence the length of the upper hall. When they reached the landing he spoke and very gently.

"Poor little girl," he said, "left all alone, aren't you, to meet every spiritual master and pastor who chooses to come a-boring?"

"Yes, I am to-day," Amy murmured back with a perceptible inclination to pout, "but, of course, I am perfectly delighted to do anything to save poor Mamma."

It seemed very wonderful that Park should speak to her so kindly, should even hold her hand. He had hardly noticed her before. Returning to the visitor she was emboldened to keep up her social end in more confident fashion. The introduction and small coin of conventionalities accomplished, Mr. Jacobs, the sense of his professional duty heavy upon him, began to place before the bereaved son of Pastor Shannon such grounds for consolation as seemed to him availing. Park listened rather stoically for a time, then, with a not altogether agreeable smile, responded:

"After all, you know, Mr. Jacobs, none of us really believe that dead men are to rise from their graves and go about the streets as in the story of Lazarus."

There was a pause in which Jacobs' face showed stark astonishment. Stimulated by this Park Shannon proceeded.

"Mankind has gone beyond the necessity for such legends. We are growing up, Mr. Jacobs. Don't you think yourself it is time to put away childish things?"

By this time Jacobs began to recover from the consternation which had been kindled by the utterance of opinions so brutally radical in a son of one of the most orthodox of Christian ministers. He was able to speak for himself. Not without dignity he replied:

"You have not been, I believe, very long in America,

Mr. Shannon. Allow me at least to say that with us there are many men of—I think,—*average* intelligence who hold firmly to the truth and authority of the New Testament."

"Then they are simply reactionary. On the most favourable assumption possible the New Testament documents were created by the disciples of Jesus out of their own personal reactions to the social environment in which they lived."

Not waiting for further opposition Park, who was evidently well pleased to discover this chance to air his views, went on with what soon approached the proportions of a lecture on the Greek myths and the influence of them upon the religious conceptions of John and Paul.

Amy, dimly guessing that all this was something which Papa would never have countenanced here in the manse, listened wide-eyed, dismayed and yet in no small degree impressed by Park's erudition and by his easy superiority over Mr. Jacobs. The latter's face grew strained as he listened to Park's flow of eloquence on a theme to him so repugnant. At the first pause which permitted he rose and took his leave abruptly.

As the house door closed Amy turned upon Park with the irrepressible exclamation: "Why did you talk to Mr. Jacobs like that? I couldn't understand a word . . . but——"

"No, dear, of course you couldn't. Why should you?" returned Park soothingly. "I'm afraid I was a little brutal."

"Anyway it sounded very wicked," Amy protested.

"Did it? I'm sorry. I see your cheeks are burning, your eyes are big with astonishment, and your lips are fairly quivering with questions."

"One of them is, why should you try to shock people?" ventured Amy, bold as a lion now.

"I never try to shock people, little one. I try to enlighten them."

"But to say such things to a minister—of course in would shock him awfully."

"It wouldn't with us—in Germany. Our ministers don't put their thinking faculties in hermetically sealed jars. They have outgrown superstitions of theology and dogma. Their work is now along ethical lines."

"Perhaps that is why the German people are so horridly cruel."

"Now look here, *mein liebes Kind!*" With this Park, whose face had grown portentously grave, took Amy by the shoulders and looked with compelling directness into her eyes. "While I am here, whether it is longer or shorter, I am going to set myself to work to correct your utterly ridiculous and childish notions of Germany and the German people. Since the war is over I dare say I may do it without being seized as a spy, as I undoubtedly should have been six months ago. So, notice what I say! You are to regard me henceforth as your instructor along this line. You are to listen seriously to me. You are no longer, I perceive, the child I left here when I went to Europe. You have very fair intellectual capacity. I must see what I can do for you."

"Suppose I hate Germany and want to hate her," cried Amy piquantly.

"Then it will be all the harder for you, that's all," was Park's nonchalant reply. "I have undertaken your training in things Germanic, you see. You can't escape."

"Why don't you show me your photographs, I mean those of your wife and the baby?" asked Amy, seeking a diversion.

"Do you really want to see them? Pure German wife, fifty per cent German baby?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, Mother has them now. Sometime I'll show them to you, will be very glad to. A mighty pretty baby she is, our Lieschen. You won't find that you can deny that."

Park's face softened at this mention in a way which surprised and touched Amy, she hardly knew why. He had shown sincere sympathy to his mother in all which she had gone through since his arrival, to be sure, but until this very hour he had treated Amy herself with an indifference which she privately resented.

The following evening Mrs. Shannon joining Park and Amy in the large living-room, they sat together under the lamplight. Mrs. Shannon had a bit of knitting-work in hand. She was serene and controlled, but it was impossible not to perceive the devastation which grief had wrought upon her, soul and body. She would never be young again. Perhaps she would never be old either. But some spring of life and joy,

which hitherto had kept her young despite the passage of years, had failed.

Park, to all appearance, was lost in a philosophical review, picked up by him in the town library. Amy looked up from her book suddenly to exclaim:

"There, Park said he would show me those pictures of his! And he hasn't done it yet."

Park glanced across the table without interest, his thoughts far away, it seemed. Mrs. Shannon remarked:

"That is my fault, Amy. Park asked me to bring the pictures down to show you and I put them in my work-basket." She bent and lifted the basket from the floor as she spoke. "It was stupid of me to forget about them all this time."

With this she handed Amy two photographs, one of a child of a year old, the other of a woman holding the same child in her arms in earlier infancy. Park plainly preferred a pose of indifference as Amy studied the pictures in silence, for he did not lift his eyes from the page he was reading. Several minutes passed, no word spoken, and, as if his pose became tedious to sustain, Park in the end rose and stepped around to Amy's side, looking over her shoulder.

"Well, what do you say about such a baby as that, Amy?" he challenged. "Mother thinks she's pretty nice, don't you, Mother dear?"

"She is a little darling," Mrs. Shannon responded warmly. "I have been telling Park how I want to see her."

"Isn't she sweet!" exclaimed Amy. "Too cun-

ning for anything in this one where she is alone," and, unthinkingly, she laid the photograph of mother and child on the table. Mrs. Shannon, with quick apprehension lest indifference to the picture of the wife should be palpable, took it in her hand and studied it for a moment.

"Agatha has such a strong face," she said.

"Oh, don't bother to hunt up something nice to say about Agatha," remarked Park bluntly. "I wrote you she wasn't anything remarkable to look at. She is too much like her father,—he has just those bulging eyes and forehead and the wide mouth. It's Tatar blood I fancy or Slavonic. Anyway it means brains, not beauty. Lieschen is said to look like Frau Lechler. I wouldn't know. She died before I went to Berlin. But notice those little hands, Amy. Aren't they the sweetest things? Mother, I always say she has just your hands," and Park, as he went back to his magazine, laid a caressing hand on his mother's shoulder.

After that they read a little, talked a little, Mrs. Shannon even played a little, German music for choice, because it pleased her son. Then the lights were lowered and they gathered around the wood-fire seeking all it could bestow of comfort and cheer.

"It won't be long now before that music of Wagner's will come back to its rightful place here in America," commented Park. "I'm glad you have the good sense, Mother, to play it still. You would." Park's vein of geniality was running free.

"Oh, yes, I never put it out of sight. Many people I know did," responded Mrs. Shannon.

"There's no use, I tell you," continued Park, "in trying to bar out the German influence. It has come to stay and all the battles of the war haven't changed that. Some victories are won in silence, you know. Look at it in theology! I have been reading an article here in this review on Wellhausen, the great Biblical critic. You know I used to work my head off in theology in my salad days. I suppose he is *the* authority still throughout the field of critical study. Perhaps you heard he died only last year. A wonderful mind! I visited him once, Mother, in Göttingen. That was before the war."

"Oh, did you, Park? You found him interesting? I believe Professor Gregg of Peterboro studied with Wellhausen many years ago. Hardy has spoken of it. Perhaps you know that Hardy and Professor Gregg are great friends."

"Douglas Gregg! Of course. I hadn't thought of the old fellow since I came back. He never liked me, I used to think. But he was saturated with the German *Wesen* way back in those days as I now recall him. I wonder how it is now."

"I think he is so still to some extent. He certainly had the courage of his convictions, however one may disagree with him, for just before we went into the war he made an address in one of his classes in eulogy of Germany's scholarship and so forth."

"Did he really? Who told you so?"

"Why, Hardy told me. He was in the class. And every man there but himself left the room. Feeling ran fierce in those days over here, Park."

"No doubt. Well, on my soul, good for Hardy for standing by."

"It was like him."

Silence, then Park came back with the exclamation:

"But good for old Gregg first of all! That's what I say. It comes back to me as I think it over what a devotee he was, when I was in Peterboro, of Wellhausen. Swallowed him lock, stock and barrel. And now I think of it, Wellhausen himself spoke of Gregg that day I saw him,—asked how he was coming on, seemed to think he had a good deal in him. I don't know but I'll go down to Peterboro when I can get away, just for a day. I'd rather like to see old Gregg. And there's Chance, All-Souls' Chance . . . he'd love to put me up, knowing Father so well."

"Yes," responded Mrs. Shannon. "Besides, Hardy, you remember, was Dr. Chance's assistant before he went into the service."

"Umph! Neat job for Hardy," commented Park with slighting emphasis. Then continuing, "Yes, I'd like immensely to tell Gregg of my visit to Wellhausen. He received me very cordially. Of course he knew Professor Lechler, but I judged he had heard also of me. My thesis was just finished then. On Traditionalism. It was some honour, I thought, such a reception. You know, Mother," Park urged, "Wellhausen is the ultimate authority on Old Testament,—the last word." Park spoke with unconsciously patronizing inflection.

"I don't know that I agree with you there, Park," remarked his mother quietly, but laying down her

knitting-work as she spoke. "You can hardy call Wellhausen the ultimate authority *now*, can you?"

"Why not?" Park exclaimed, visibly astonished.

"Well, of course he was acclaimed in some such fashion thirty years ago by Pfleiderer and Kuenen, too, but there has been a stiff fight, you know, since, over his cardinal positions. Many of them, I supposed it was understood, are now rejected by critics of his own rank."

"What do you know about Wellhausen?" Park put the question with sudden harshness. "I fancy you haven't gone in very heavily on Higher Criticism, have you, Mother? You don't read German, as I remember."

Ignoring his rudeness, Rachel Shannon replied that Wellhausen's *Prolegomena* had been translated. Perhaps he had forgotten.

Park rose from his chair with a subdued exclamation, thrust his hands deep into his pockets and began to pace the floor, his chin up in the air, a cryptic smile on his face. Mrs. Shannon, rising also, bade him and Amy a kindly good-night and withdrew to her own room.

"Where on earth did Mother pick up this extensive erudition on Wellhausen *et al?* He was *persona non grata* to Father," muttered Park when she had departed.

"Mamma and Hardy used to study together about religious things a lot," declared Amy bridling.

"*Songs for the Little Ones at Home?*" Park sneered.

"Park Shannon, I think you are perfectly outrageous!" exclaimed Amy. She was overcoming her awe of him. "Wild horses wouldn't make our Hardy speak to his mother the way you did just now,—or about her."

"Our Hardy!" repeated Park with a covert sneer.

"That is what I said," returned Amy shortly. Her wrath was rising.

"What do you mean by 'our'?"

There was a moment's silence. Amy's cheeks grew crimson.

"Out with it!" cried Park laughing half derisively.

"Very well then! Since you are in the family it is all right for you to know it, but no one must, outside. Hardy and I are engaged."

As she spoke Amy lifted her head and looked with something of defiance at Hardy's brother.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" cried Park, bending to clap a hand to his knee in token of amazement. "The deuce you are," he added more soberly coming back to his place by the fireside. "Engaged! This from the mouth of babes and sucklings! Why, my precious little goose, you and Hardy are nothing but kids! You are anyway. It must have been what you could call an 'inside job' on Hardy's part. He took advantage of your inexperience! Smart boy! Let us be thankful that you know enough to keep your nonsense to yourselves anyway."

"It is not nonsense," cried Amy vehemently, "and I won't stay here to be talked to like this another minute. Good-night, you awfully disagreeable Park

Shannon," with which she started to leave the room. His hand on her arm detained her. She found herself forced back into her chair. Park, from his, leaned forward and took her hand between both his own.

"There, there, *Kleine!*" he murmured. "I can't blame you though for getting angry, little one. It's so awfully becoming to you. I may be tempted to put you in a passion again, just to see how pretty it makes you."

"How can you be so underbred, Park!" remonstrated Amy, her anger still unappeased. "You are utterly different from any one in the family."

"You see, my dear," returned Park meditatively, "I have had advantages which they lack. I have trained myself in a different school."

"I should think you had!" she retorted, pulling away her hand.

"I can't tell you, Amy," he went on, his tone now of a sudden serious and sympathetic, "how sorry I am that I spoke unfeelingly of you and Hardy. Can you forgive me? It wasn't quite good news for me, some way. I suspect that I am a good deal of a dog in the manger."

"If you will treat me respectfully, me and Hardy, too, after this, I am willing to *try* and forgive you."

Amy rose as she spoke and left her place. Glancing back at the door she was struck by the humbled and penitent air which Park wore. She called back her good-night with involuntary relenting.

XVIII

DALRYMPLE

THE following morning brought Rachel Shannon a letter from Coblenz, from Hardy. It was the first letter, although not the first message, which she had received from her younger son since his father's death.

A sentence in the letter recalled to Mrs. Shannon's mind the fact that many weeks before a large, shapeless package of eccentric and travel-stained appearance had been delivered at the manse. It was for Hardy and had been sent by Hardy. In the absorption of her husband's illness Mrs. Shannon had ordered this bundle, unopened, to be taken up to Hardy's room. There it had lain until now forgotten. Its contents would interest Park and Amy probably, especially the former, as having come from the Rhineland.

In the afternoon accordingly Mrs. Shannon called the young people up to Hardy's room, kept always as he had kept it, that they might, together, explore Hardy's trophies. With eagerness the cords were cut and the canvas torn away to disclose, one after another, a German soldier's helmet, a roll of military civic orders brought from French cities formerly in the hands of the German army, a bayonet wrapped securely in a sumptuous officer's army blanket, also German, and, at the very last, Amy discovered a small,

time-worn, leather-bound German book. Finding it unpromising she handed it to Mrs. Shannon who, after examining it, laid it on the table, remarking that the date was 1793 and it must be valuable as an antique; unfortunately she herself could not read it. Park betrayed no interest in the volume. Under his mother's direction he arranged the various articles on the shelf of a closet. The book, however, remained lying on the table.

An hour later, Hardy's room being again left in its usual solitary state, Park returned to it alone and picked up the book, reading its title: *Johann Salomo Semler, 1725–1791. Der Vater des Deutschen Rationalismus.* Obedient to a perfectly proper and natural impulse he put the book in his pocket and betook himself to his father's study. There he remained studying the faded pages until dinner was announced.

At the table Park alluded to what he had said on the previous evening regarding his inclination to make a brief excursion to Peterboro. The more he thought of it, the more he found himself wishing to revisit the dear old Seminary. He had been very happy there,—he said, this to Mrs. Shannon's pleased surprise. She had always suspected that Park was not quite a success in Peterboro. He really wanted to see Douglas Gregg. Several other men were there who wouldn't have forgotten him. There was no hurry, but if business matters, a little later, should not demand his constant presence in Melrose, perhaps he would write Chance and see if he could give him a bed,—just for a night.

A week later Park took the train from New York

en route for Peterboro, the time-stained Life of Semler in his pocket for train reading. Hardly had he settled comfortably into his seat in the car and opened the book when a hand touched his shoulder. Looking up Park recognized in the man leaning over to greet him the lame young parson who had had part in the funeral service of his father,—Barton Conrad, his brother's friend. He remembered hearing that this man was now in New York serving on the editorial staff of a religious paper.

Although not precisely overjoyed at the interruption to his reading, Park returned Conrad's greeting cordially and invited him to take the vacant place by his side. Remarking as he did so, that he was only going a half hour's journey, Conrad glanced with keen scrutiny at the small book in its bruised binding in the other's hand.

"What is that book, may I ask?" he inquired. "It has a singularly venerable look. Also foreign."

Park lifted the book to a point where Conrad could see it conveniently and turned to the title page.

"It's some of the rubbish that my brother Hardy, like all the rest of these American doughboys, sends home as souvenirs," he replied carelessly.

Conrad did not perceive the slight sneer which belonged to the explanation. He was not looking for such expression in one of the Shannons. He had met Park only on the day of the funeral when he was solemnized and subdued, had retained only a vague impression of some disappointment for the family mentioned by Mrs. Gregg, regarding his marrying a

German Professor's daughter. His whole attention at the moment was bent upon the book.

"Not rubbish precisely, is it?" he commented. "I wonder if it may not be the very book Hardy wrote me about some time ago, an old book he picked up in an antiquariat or some such place in Cologne. May I take it a minute, Mr. Shannon?"

"Most certainly," Park responded, his readiness covering a very pronounced preference for not giving the book into Conrad's hand. Five minutes passed during which the latter turned the leaves of the volume rapidly and examined them with absorbed attention. At length he handed the book back, remarking:

"Thank you very much. It is undoubtedly the book of which Hardy wrote me, for he would hardly have picked up two lives of Semler."

"I should really not have supposed that my brother would care for even one life of Semler," returned Park with his former sardonic implication.

"Well, you see," remarked Conrad, not minded to scent antagonism to Hardy on the part of Hardy's brother, "Hardy has been in pretty close touch with Gregg,—Douglas Gregg, our Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Peterboro. You were in the Seminary, if I remember correctly, for a short time, years ago. Of course you would remember him."

"Assuredly I remember him." Park was disinclined, for some reason, to mention the fact that he was at the moment on his way to pay a visit to the old Professor's shrine.

"Hardy seems to have been struck with a curious

parallelism between this old Johann Salomo Semler and Douglas Gregg. I think that is what gave in his mind a particular significance to the book," continued Conrad.

"Oh, really," Park's response was indifferent but there was an odd gleam in his eyes.

"Yes,—that peculiar combination of personal piety with radical free-thinking. It seems to be characteristic of both men. And then, you know, anyway," Conrad added, "Semler, little as he is remembered nowadays, was the Father and Founder of Higher Criticism. We all have to have a go at him sooner or later. So I suppose Hardy thought he would have a use for this old book by and by."

"Yes, no doubt," Park returned briefly as he took the volume from Conrad's extended hand. "I very much doubt its possessing any especial value myself. However, I brought it along thinking it would be preferable as train reading to your abominable American newspapers."

Soon Conrad rose to go and the two parted. Park, with a long breath as of release from the necessity of keeping up a show of cordiality which he did not feel, settled back to the story of Johann Salomo Semler's life with a more eager interest than he had hitherto displayed.

The March day was waning and lights were on when Park Shannon found himself seated in the parlour at 17 Locust Street opposite Douglas Gregg. Both men were in evening dress.

Park had been welcomed to Peterboro an hour or two earlier by his host, Dr. Chance, with the announcement that he had hit a fortunate time for his visit. The Symposium, that distinguished group of the city's elect, which had foregone its meetings for a year on account of the war's pressure upon the time and attention of its members, had been called to come together to-night at President Loring's. Judge Sawyer had as his guest for a day or two an eminent Christian Indian publicist, Mr. Narayan Bose, who had stopped for a day or two in Peterboro on his way from the west. He was in the United States only for a short time, being on a journey around the world in the interests of his country's industrial development. He had consented to talk to the Symposium on Gandhi. Dr. Chance was delighted to invite Park as his guest to participate in this notable occasion.

This arranged, Park and Dr. Chance had separated to meet at seven o'clock at Dr. Loring's house to which Park would go in company with Professor Gregg.

Rather interesting, Park thought, as he now sat phrasing somewhat perfunctory courtesies, to be on his way to dine at the house of the President of the Seminary in company with the Seminary's most famous professor. He and Gregg had never hit it off any too well in that year which he spent in Peterboro. Even now, it was a trifle disappointing that he was not taken into the Professor's study, as he well knew Hardy would have been. The prim formality of this parlour chilled the flow of geniality which he had fancied himself initiating in this interview, the only one he could

hope to capture, and the object of his journey from Melrose. For after all, what did he care for Dr. Chance, or Gandhi, or Mr. Narayan Bose? Certainly he had not come to hear Douglas Gregg express his preference for Hardy! But that was, for the moment, in effect, his portion. Not that Gregg was ever copious in his expressions. Merely that, quite as a matter of course, Hardy's place in the Gregg family and in the sympathy and affection of its members was made evident.

It wouldn't do, of course, to slip in any suggestion, however remote, of a slighting nature, such as one brother very well may of another and no harm done. Something in those impassive and impartial eyes of the old scholar warned Park off that pitfall. The conversation, however, quite naturally and quite speedily, turned to Mr. Bose to whose address they were to listen after dinner.

"Yes," remarked Gregg, "I am looking forward with very strong interest to meeting Mr. Bose. He is especially appealing to me in connection with our missions in the Bombay District. His grandfather was eminent among the first converts to Christianity in India and he is himself a very important member of the native church. I have heard of him especially through Dalrymple, head of our mission. By the way, Mr. Shannon, perhaps you would know Dalrymple?"

"Yes, sir. He was in the class next mine when I was here in Peterboro," Park replied, with what enthusiasm he could muster. Had he come here then to hear Douglas Gregg talk on Foreign Missions? "Fine

chap. I remember that he was a particularly good speaker."

"Oh, yes," Gregg answered, "he was a fine speaker because he had something to say. He has been doing strong work there in India. Of course since the war we don't have regular reports. It is more than a year since we have heard from him."

"That certainly must give you, sir, a very especial personal interest just now in Mr. Bose."

Having done his duty with exemplary patience by Hardy, and Bose and Dalrymple, Park presently, a glance at his watch showing him that it was nearly time to be on the way, rather skilfully drew Gregg's attention to his own experiences in Berlin, his studies, his achievements, the men he had met.

For a time Park felt a certain coldness in the courteous attention which met him as he advanced along this line. But, by no means daunted, he kept on, taking Gregg's sympathy with the positions of German scholars for granted. Just as they left the house, he introduced Wellhausen, the strongest card he could play, as he said to himself.

It was fortunate, as Park afterwards reflected, that he did not have to bring Wellhausen into the constricting atmosphere of that parlour. On the street, the fresh March wind blowing on their faces with its hint of remote relenting, Douglas Gregg dropped his cautious neutrality. He rose to Wellhausen with undisguised eagerness. For twenty minutes Park had things his own way. Poised between the great Wellhausen and the great Lechler he felt that he himself

shone with reflected lustre. The master passion of Gregg's intellectual life, that for German scholarship, once aroused, shook off the restraints which he had himself put upon it. With satisfaction Park assured himself that, at last, the man himself had been laid bare to his sight.

On arriving at Dr. Loring's these two parted, Park being claimed by Dr. Chance as his guest, and so introduced to the President. Meantime Gregg was drawn at once into brief but earnest conference with Narayan Bose himself. A handsome, polished gentleman this representative Indian,—tall for his race, slender, graceful, swift of movement yet quiescent of manner, the impassiveness of his dusky face contradicted by the penetrating glances of his eyes.

"I have, sir, if you please," Bose said to Douglas Gregg, "a note, here in my pocket, addressed to you. It is from your devoted friend and former pupil, Mr. Dalrymple. He asked me to give it to you, in person. Also in person to give you, if possible, some setting-forth of his position at this present time. Would it be your pleasure to receive this note now?"

Gregg having signified assent a note was placed in his hand. Requesting the liberty of opening it on the spot, he found it brief, a mere introduction of Mr. Bose, with a request that he might have the favour of a personal interview with Gregg himself.

"When can we have this chance for conferring together?" he asked quickly. They were moving towards the dining-room now at the invitation of Dr. Loring.

"That, sir, is my question. I leave this city early in the morning."

"Then, Mr. Bose, if you feel like walking to my house with me when we break up to-night, we can have half an hour's talk. Longer if you will come in and stay a while."

The Oriental bowed with grave ceremony and they joined the movement to the dinner table.

The hour was already late when Douglas Gregg and his companion started together from Dr. Loring's door. They were leaving the imposing luxury of the President's mansion for the bourgeois dulness of the Professor's narrow house. But the contrast never suggested itself to the mind of either man. For the tidings which the Indian Christian thinker had to bring to the American Christian scholar were of an absorbing nature. Begun about midnight at the foot of Dr. Loring's lawn, their conversation continued in Gregg's study into the small hours.

Mr. Bose asked, in beginning what he had to say, for the privilege of speaking with absolute frankness. The request was urgently accorded him.

"Then, sir, would it be agreeable to you, if I should state the case as concerns Mr. Dalrymple, by beginning with a brief backward look on the story of Christianity in my country?"

"Whatever and however you choose to present what is in your mind, my dear sir," Gregg replied, "you can rest assured of my interest."

"Very well then. I thank you. I am a third generation Indian Christian. My grandfather, a

Brahman, was one of Alexander Duff's first converts. My father became a Christian pastor in Bombay. Both believed, with implicit faith, and in face of fiery persecution, in the Christ of the Gospels as presented to them by those early missionaries.

"For a century this faith has been the inspiration of the native church as it has of the missionaries. Of course, there have been changes. Each generation speaks a dialect of its own and speaks with its own emphasis. But the dynamic which wrought such marvellous results among us has remained unchanged: —the message of a divine Redeemer who gave His life on the Cross for us and our sins, and who rose again; whose nature and ministry are set forth in the divinely inspired word,—the Scriptures."

Douglas Gregg listened intently, responding by no word as the other proceeded, his language chosen and pronounced with the meticulous care of the English-speaking Oriental.

"To-day, what has happened? Only here and there is it even suspected in the East, but the change which has come to Western Protestant Christianity itself is the most profound known to history. I grasp it, at last, myself, but I could not have understood it clearly had I not come here, had I not been received into your Liberal theological circles.

"The message of the missionaries who go out from among these is no longer personal salvation through a divine Redeemer. It is now acknowledged to be a social democratic program, a campaign for the uplift of Oriental civilization. It is education, sanitation,

hospitals, intensive farming and the like. The early missionaries, while all these things were included in their work, were first and last and always 'Jesus Christ's men.' They are now described in your own religious press as '*unfortunate in their claims for the inspiration of the Bible.*' The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man,—yes, these two articles, I believe, still survive. Little more. The man Christ Jesus is to be known as '*the child of his time,*' or '*the world's great citizen.*'

"Now, Professor Gregg, if I may be yet bolder, I will say that this last was essentially the position of your friend Mr. Dalrymple when he came to our mission some years ago. He did not reveal at first the difference in motive and objective between himself and our Christian workers. He was wise and prudent. He worked hard and faithfully along his chosen lines of humanitarian helpfulness. But,—this could not last! Mr. Dalrymple is a man of scrupulous honesty. Also of fine perceptions and sympathies. He discovered for himself that such a mission,—that is, one of 'uplift' to our civilization, is an impertinence. You have your civilization. We have ours. Yours may be better but ours is good for us. You, for instance, bewail the ignorance and seclusion of our Hindu and Mohammedan women. Would you transform them into these half-naked, painted creatures who dance and smoke cigarettes with men in your hotel parlours? Sir, outwardly our nautch-girls seem nuns in comparison. Forgive us if we prefer our ancient customs, our Hindu womanhood!

"If your Western Christianity is but a civilizing agency, our thinking people ask frankly: 'Why should it interest us particularly? We have our own, we have also our old faith,' they say, 'our old worship, our old traditions, ours before Abraham was or Moses. Your Jesus cult, it seems your scholars now say, is but a pale reflex of Oriental legend. Let us revive our old watchword, *India for the Indians!* We will fashion our civilization to suit ourselves. Gandhi serves us well as leader.'

"Professor Gregg, I see a shadow of sadness fall upon your face and I deplore it. I would not, if I could avoid it, be a prophet of evil tidings. But I must deliver my message. Your friend Mr. Dalrymple has freely told me that he has it not in his power to reach, much less to touch the hearts of my people with the ethical message of your modern schools. And he has no other message to offer. He is a sincere man. Some months ago he provisionally accepted a post as professor in a Government College. His resignation as a missionary is on its way to your Board, indeed may be already in their hands at this moment. But it was his wish that you should hear the facts, and the operating causes behind them, at first hand, thus, through myself."

"Dalrymple!" Douglas Gregg pronounced the name under his breath, then broke off, making a gesture as of renunciation.

"I think, sir, it may very well happen eventually," Bose proceeded in a calm, reflective tone, "that American Protestant Missions shall follow in the steps

of the early German-Danish Missions in Southern India. I need hardly remind you that, a century ago, the strength of the Lutheran Church being undermined by Rationalism, those missions died of heart failure, if I may use a medical term familiar here. For you see, however helpful and admirable philanthropy is, as a motive power it is not strong enough permanently to command the prodigious sacrifices demanded by Foreign Missions."

The two men were alone in Gregg's study. The clock on the mantel had struck two. Narayan Bose noted the haggard lines in the old Professor's face. He rose to go.

"You must pardon me, sir, that I have intruded so long upon you, and at such an hour. I depart. But may I be allowed just one word more,—a word concerning myself, if it is not presumption?"

"I beg you to proceed. I wish to hear whatever you may be inclined to entrust to me."

"Sir, it is this only;—I do not share the modernistic conceptions of Christianity. Christ is still my Divine and Risen Lord and Redeemer. My reason tells me, as well as my faith, that men did not draw together to create the Christian Church under the mere force of devotion to a wise and helpful teacher. From the time the first disciples companied with their Risen Lord they adored Him as *divine*, one whom death could not hold. I see this also;—nothing can save our race from sinking in despair beneath the burden of materialism and a materialistic philosophy of life, except Faith in Jesus Christ.

"And now I shall perhaps give you one pang more, but I must tell you all. Protestantism, I am convinced, even though against its will, *is at the point of betraying Christianity.* The principle of religious authority safeguarding the Bible and its divine revelation, as I now see it, becomes an imperative necessity. One Church alone upholds this principle. I am to be received into the Catholic Church a few days hence in the city of New York. I see no other way. Good-night."

Douglas Gregg laid a detaining hand upon the other's shoulder.

"You cannot mean to tell me, my friend, that you propose to surrender into the keeping of an ecclesiastical hierarchy the freedom of your conscience, of thought, judgment, will. . . . It is incredible!"

Their eyes met. Through them the minds of the two men, for an instant, wrestled in single combat. Suddenly a smile, melancholy and fleeting, passed over the face of Narayan Bose.

"Honoured sir," he said gently, "you speak with truth. The surrender I shall make is indeed incredible. But yours is yet greater. For I do not surrender the Cross of Christ. All is said. Again, Good-night."

The door closed. Left alone Douglas Gregg bent his head as he stood as one who meets the buffeting of a storm wind.

BOOK III
WAYS AND THE WAY

XIX

THE MISTY FLATS

JUNE at Melrose and Hardy Shannon home from the wars!

It was a strange home-coming. His mother's white face and whitened hair, her brave but stricken look, her exhaustion, denied, but betrayed in movements and voice; Amy away at her school up the Hudson preparing for her approaching graduation ceremonies; in his father's place,—Park. There was the rub!

For a new atmosphere struck Hardy at the very threshold as investing the manse. His father's presence, gracious and benign, had pervaded the place with peculiar charm. Not only was this influence lost, but, in his father's place, at the head of the table, in the position of authority, was Park,—loud-voiced, aggressive, half-insolent, a stranger—not the brother he remembered from ten years ago. To Hardy, Park seemed Prussianized. Certainly he was transformed. Also, in some intangible fashion, he transformed his present environment.

Not altogether intangible, this fashion, Hardy reflected, when, on the second day after his return, he entered the study for the first time. He had dreaded to go there, feeling that the associations in that central scene of his father's home life might be too sharp.

This dread was instantly dispelled. Every association with or suggestion of Charles Shannon belonging to the place had died a violent death. Of his fastidious orderliness, his bent for beauty and grace in his smallest belongings, of the clarity and purity essential to him not a vestige remained.

As Hardy sat in the oriel window, his eyes upon Park sitting, pipe in mouth and much at ease at their father's desk, in the centre of the room, a slow anger mounted within him. An invincible disorderliness was spread everywhere, invincible Hardy knew of certainty, else his mother's ruling instinct for order would have won the day here of all places. The books which lined the walls had lost their proper formation. No piece of furniture held its own place. The air was blue with fresh and fetid with stale tobacco smoke. Packages of cigarettes and trails of ashes decorated the desk itself . . . sacred almost like an altar that desk had always been in their young years to Charles Shannon's sons. Odd volumes of Nietzsche and Hearst newspapers lay about. The desk itself was piled with novels of the Cabell and Ben Hecht stripe. A multitude of letters was strewn in what seemed hopeless confusion. The manuscript upon which Park had been at work when Hardy came in had been unceremoniously thrown into an open drawer. The drawer was shut before Park had wheeled in his swivel-chair to face him.

Hardy's wrath was not of the sort which demands moral effort of repression. It demanded and would have immediate and decisive vent. He had picked up

a copy of *The Challenge* and, as he looked up from it, he remarked quite casually:

"Can you get along all right, Park, if the house is closed now pretty soon? You see Mother will have to go away somewhere. We have about decided on New Hampshire. The mountains always suit her. She is looking ill, don't you think so?"

Park stared at his brother. His manner disarmed suspicion of any frame-up here, and yet he had never seen Hardy white like that in the old days except on two or three not-to-be-forgotten occasions when he was in a towering passion. You could see this queer pallor under the coat of tan this morning. Park certainly had not noticed it before, but probably it was just some effect of the war's hard living conditions.

"When was all this settled, pray tell?" returned Park. "It's news to me. As I understand it, the church people here have given Mother the free use of the manse for a year or longer. That ass Jacobs, being without a wife, has been of some use for once. What's up anyway?"

"Simply that Mother must have this change," Hardy replied abruptly. "And have it pretty quick, too. I suppose I know the limits of her endurance better now than you do. The thing can't be put off safely. Take that from me. I suppose Mother didn't quite like to make plans definitely until I got here. There's nothing to wait for any longer as I see it, if you can take care of yourself. The maids want their vacation. We've got to cut down house expenses all around now."

"What about Amy?"

"Amy, I supposed you knew, will go right from school to a camp in the Catskills. She will be gone for all July anyway."

"She keeps you posted on her plans, I see," commented Park grimly.

Ignoring this remark Hardy went on, growing cooler as his anger stiffened:

"Well, Park, it's up to us to get Mother away from this house as quick as we can. Next week at latest. There is a small hotel up near Monadnock which is always open in June, a place where she and . . . a place where Mother always feels very much at home. I can take her up there perfectly well, perhaps stay a while myself. It probably wouldn't hurt me. But how about your plans?"

"Well, naturally I hadn't made any plans for leaving here at present. I have a piece of work on hand which will keep me on this side a month or two, perhaps more, in order to finish."

"Do you use the New York libraries?"

"Oh, yes, all the time. These books," and Park glanced disparagingly about the study, "are of precious little use to me. But I need English books and that is why it is necessary for me to do the work while I am in this country."

Park was convinced now that Hardy was "all right —not trying to do him out of anything." He began to see several points in the new scheme which would particularly well suit him. He had become hand and glove with a group of young German-American and

German-Jewish writers of New York led by Scharpzett, who were, with varying success, seeking to initiate a revolt against the American tradition in letters, morals, religion. Often he had wished he could be on hand for the all-night smokers, but scruples against disturbing his mother had usually held him back.

"Do you know of any comfortable place where you could put up?" persisted Hardy. "Where you could work all right? It would be rather good perhaps if you could get into the neighbourhood of the New York Public Library."

"Yes, that's a fact," replied Park, warming perceptibly. "Well, of course, Hard, you can count on my not standing in the way of any arrangement you and Mother think best for her. Now you're here I suppose I could be spared almost any time. I'm staying on this side a great deal longer than Agatha expected. She doesn't like it very well either. So I suppose the faster I get on with my work the better."

"You have stood by all right for a fact, Park, and it's my turn now. I really don't think you need to put off going up to town a day longer than suits your work. Fix things any way you please. Probably there will be a bit of turning upside down here, getting the house ready to leave for a couple of months . . . all that."

"What are you going to do yourself, old chap?" asked Park, bending to light a cigarette, his pipe being smoked out. "I suppose it's to be back to Theology in September, isn't it?"

"Yes. And I may have a job in Peterboro before

summer is over,—something which will help me to pay my way. It isn't settled yet."

Hardy had risen and stood now at the door looking back into the smoky room. Park's finger was already upon the handle of a desk-drawer, the one, his brother noted, into which he had thrust his manuscript. In that moment Hardy knew that nothing would induce him to enter the study again until he could go to aid in its cleansing, to do his part towards restoring it to its proper character as a place hallowed by noble memories.

And Park Shannon never dreamed that he had been ejected from his father's study. Nevertheless an obscure sense, to which he had long been a stranger, was upon him that he had encountered a personal force stronger than his own.

Rachel Shannon was surprised when Hardy told her to precisely what she had been committed. His plan, she confessed, was the thing which she had strongly desired for herself, but which she had regarded as an impossibility. For there was Park, quite obviously on her hands.

"He is on my hands now," Hardy informed her with his grave smile, the smile which seemed so new to her on his face. Reason enough for it, and yet her heart cried out for the old boyish gaiety, the light-heartedness which belonged to Hardy before he went over-seas. When he left her the dew of his youth was yet upon him. It had vanished,—scorched and seared in the war's fires.

He had changed in less than two years as much, she

thought, in a way, as Park had changed in ten. This not because his face was weather-beaten and war-worn, with new lines in it of strain and suffering. The change was not even that which must come with their new sorrow. It went deeper. Something stern, solemn even, and yet radiant, had taken up its dwelling in his eyes. He had looked on death. . . . Yes. . . . Did he look also on life . . . the life eternal, in its reality? Perhaps even the encounter with death had brought to him new spiritual insight. He seemed to her now like some strong militant angel sent to fight for her that she might be freed from contradictions over-great. Gradually now it began to dawn upon Rachel Shannon that Hardy, here in their quiet New England home, was contending with the same hostile energy with which he had wrestled in France. Yes, Park Shannon was Prussianized. Even his mother saw it.

The following morning found "the Shannon boys" on board a commuters' train bound for New York. Park, eager now for the freedom from various forms of restraint to be gained by removal from Melrose to bachelor quarters in New York's Bohemia, was bent on a room-hunting expedition. Hardy had a longer excursion in view, but was first of all interested in meeting Conrad at his office by appointment. Conrad had been at the steamer landing upon his arrival from Germany; they were able then to gather each the other's "vital statistics," as Hardy put it. Now they would have chance for a more leisurely talk, the last for the present.

It had been definitely decided that the manse would be closed in a few days, Hardy then taking his mother up to Monadnock for six weeks or more.

"Look at this, Hard!" remarked Park as the brothers sat side by side, morning papers in hand, on the train. He pointed to an advertisement in display type: "'Fascinating Beyond Words are the New Linens!' 'Tissue Ginghams are Adorable!'[1] What rot!"

"I can go you one better," Hardy responded and read from his sheet: "'Ravishing Sweaters!' And again, 'A Whale of a Book.' . . . 'Exotic Splendour in Top Coats.' It's pretty bad, isn't it? The people here at home seem to have had their own form of shell shock, don't they?"

"How is this for a Catholic Church notice,—'Mater Dolorosa Euchre Party'?" returned Park. "Our German papers read like a page from the New Testament after your public and private hectics over here. So long! I'll step into the smoking car. See you to-morrow, I suppose."

Left to himself Hardy discovered something of more serious interest in the paper, something which he cut out with his pocket-knife and stored in his letter case to bring out later.

He found Conrad in his private office of *The Christian Standard,* watching eagerly for his coming. Hardy thought him off colour in his looks and said so. Conrad admitted that he was tired, that he found the

[1] These advertisements are copied verbatim from leading New York and Boston newspapers of the date.

office confinement telling somewhat upon his health, and yet immensely liked his work. Still he hoped some day to enter the pastorate.

As they discussed various mutual interests Conrad's face brightened perceptibly until Mary Minot's name was mentioned.

"Nothing for me there, Shannon," he said, shaking his head gloomily. "I put it to the touch a month ago and lost it all. Not her friendship though. That is mine, forever. . . . And, you know,—a fellow like me had no right to expect anything else, naturally. But I tell you who ever wins that girl's heart can bless the day he was born. She is an Evelyn Hope to me, made 'of spirit and fire and dew.'"

"I am the last to dispute that with you, old fellow," commented Hardy, "but I am tremendously sorry for your end of it, believe me."

"I should believe that, Shannon," said Conrad seriously, "even if you were to offer yourself to Mary Minot to-morrow. In fact, I think I rather hope you will."

"Nothing to it, Conrad. I am bound in another direction."

Conrad lifted his eyebrows.

"Your cousin?"

Hardy nodded.

"I must cut our morning short and go out to hunt a graduation present, wrist watch or some such. Then I go up to her school for a call, getting back to Melrose in the night some time. I haven't seen Amy yet since I got back."

"She's a charming girl all right. I congratulate you."

Hardy returned Conrad's handshake cordially albeit without emotion. Then he took from his pocket the newspaper clipping he had made on the train.

"Conrad, I have been out of the atmosphere of theology and religious discussion a good while. They weren't talking about the supernatural very much in the A. E. F. as you can imagine. But I have had sight of what men really want in religion. Just now on the train I came across a short letter in my paper which shows me that the old controversy here is still on. I've kept it because it gives a manly, forthright statement of facts, that is, facts as I found them."

"Read it, will you, Shannon? Who writes it?"

"Captain William A. Eddy of the United States Marines. I want to read it to you."

Accordingly the letter,[1] which follows, was read and eagerly discussed between the two friends.

"To the Editor:

"'A. L. R.' in last Sunday's issue wrote that: 'The chaplains who served with the deepest benefit over there were men who think for themselves,' and who had 'discarded belief in miracles and superstitions.' I knew intimately a number of the chaplains of the Second Division A. E. F., and saw a good deal of them and their work during the Battles of Belleau Wood, Vierzy and St. Mihiel, May-October, 1917, as well as many chaplains with whom I became acquainted during my sixteen months in the hospital. Let me state emphatically that the only ones that were worth their

[1] Letter used in part by permission of the writer.

salt to the man in the trenches were the ones who believed in 'miracles and superstitions.' . . .

". . . Your hand-shaking chaplain, who had outgrown his 'superstitions,' was able to offer chocolate to the men, but that was about all. We had no need for a professional handshaker; the boys cheered each other up as no outsider could do. What we were grateful for was a priest who was not ashamed of his ministry, who did not camouflage his job, but frankly brought the power of Christ to hungry souls. For these men we had respect and love, whether Protestant or Catholic.

"Yes, the war did test religion. It proved once and for all that Christianity based on a man's eloquence and smiling face is superfluous in the face of death and that the 'miracle,' the supernatural power of Christ working through His priests and ministers is the most important fact that religion has to offer to men. . . ."

"Solemn truth that is, Conrad!" added Hardy, putting the cutting away. "You and I can vouch for it."

"I am sure you very well can," returned Conrad earnestly. "Just before your return I met an officer of your old division—Major Grant,—you remember him?"

"Well." The name brought a sudden glow into Hardy's face.

"He told me a lot about you, my friend. Told me how the fellows often sent for you instead of for the chaplains. Told me of your ministration to the wounded, the dying and the dead. Well I know what that would mean!"

A motion of Hardy's hand put an end to further discussion of this subject.

"Every man did what he could," he said briefly.

"Very well then, Hardy," returned Conrad seriously, "what do you think is the prospect for a repentant and renewed Germany? You have had some chance at least to see for yourself."

Hardy's face grew grim with painful recollection.

"Conrad," he said slowly, "Germany is farthest from repentance, farthest from feeling her own moral ignominy. The situation over there is appalling. Men and women are withdrawing from the churches literally by the thousand because of atheism. The stage is set for Communism which is another name for the *Spirit which Denies*. The existence of theological faculties in Universities such as Leipsic and Jena is simply dependent now on whether the communistic party gains the ascendant in the Diet."

"Such is, after all, the natural outcome of making the Divinity School a Department of the State Government," commented Conrad gravely.

"Oh, yes! But I tell you when you see school children, ranks upon ranks of them, parading in the city streets with banners flying, inscribed, 'Down with the God Superstition,' 'This is our creed:—we know no Father in Heaven,' etc., you are aghast at thought of what abyss the nation is hurrying towards."

"Is all that possible? Have you seen such things, Hardy, yourself? Are they common?"

"Yes, to all your questions. Why, Conrad, it is a fact, told me by a competent witness while I was in

Germany, that one-third of the German population is to-day in open battle against Christianity. . . . And it is from Germany that our Modernists take their religion."

The two men faced each other in awed silence, their thoughts running back to the scholastic paths they had trodden, led by the German mind. When Hardy spoke next it was in a changed tone and with an unconscious motion as of one who throws aside a heavy and oppressive weight.

"Come now, Conrad," he said. "Let's forget Germany. Tell me what you are doing. I want to see some copies of your paper."

"Here is a sheaf I have ready and waiting for you to take along. I want you to notice a series of articles, signed only with my initials, which began in this very last issue. There are to be three in all."

Conrad opened a paper and indicated a contribution headed, "The Higher Critic; Snap Shots by Robert Browning."

"Let me explain!" he began with fresh energy. "I am using passages describing an old German Biblical scholar taken from Browning's *Christmas Day*. The poem was written, by the way, in the year 1849. Notice how precisely it fits now. Seventy-five years have brought nothing new, nothing constructive. I divide the passages into three sections, and place one at the head of each part of my series. My scheme is to develop the theme which is given in extremely condensed form in the poem. Browning's lines are simply great. Listen! My first shot:—he describes himself

as in Göttingen, most likely, in the Professor's classroom. . . .

> "—'He'—the Professor—'proposed inquiring first
> Into the various sources whence
> This Myth of Christ is derivable;
> Demanding from the evidence
> (Since plainly no such life was livable)
> How these phenomena should class?
> Whether 'twere best opine Christ was,
> Or never was at all, or whether
> He was and was not, both together—
> It matters little for the name,
> So the idea be left the same.'

"How about that, Shannon?"

"Piercingly accurate, is it not? How have I happened to miss it? I thought I knew the poem," responded Hardy keenly interested.

"Now then! No matter about my enlargement of the theme. You have it all in the paper there with you. I only want to give you the other Browning *motifs* which I shall use in successive numbers. This for second:

> "'Twas obviously as well to take
> The popular story,—understanding
> How the ineptitude of time,
> And the penman's prejudice, expanding
> Fact into fable fit for the clime,
> Had, by slow and sure degrees, translated it
> Into this myth, this Individuum,—
> Which, when reason had strained and abated it
> Of foreign matter, left, for residuum,
> A Man!—a right true man, however.
>
> . . . . . .

His word, their tradition,—which, though it meant
Something entirely different
From all that those who only heard it,
In their simplicity averred it,
Had yet a meaning quite as respectable.

. . . . . .

But the Critic . . .
Pumps out with ruthless ingenuity
Atom by atom and leaves you—vacuity.'"

"'*All those who only heard it!*'" cried Hardy. "Browning certainly made a keen thrust there. Give us the third snap shot. I must read 'Christmas Eve' over again."

"Be sure you do,—and all the way through. Here is my last *motif*. The *reductio ad absurdum*. I believe it is the best of all. . . .

"'And how when the Critic had done his best,
And the pearl of price, at reason's test,
Lay dust and ashes levigable
On the Professor's lecture-table,—

. . . . . .

To be swept forthwith to its natural dust-hole,—
He bids us, when we least expect it,
Take back our faith,—if it be not just whole,
Yet a pearl indeed, as his tests affect it, . . .
Go home and venerate the myth
I thus have experimented with—
This man, continue to adore him
Rather than all who went before him,
And all who ever followed after!'"

"You certainly have it all there, brother," remarked Hardy thoughtfully after an interval of silence. "'Venerate the Myth!' Reduce the supreme source of our knowledge of Christ to dust and ashes and then

assure us that such a man, if he had ever lived, would have been worthy of our worship, and such a Myth, if only it had been history, could have commanded our reverence."

"Yes. It is the desperate attempt to hold on to the husk of Christianity with the kernel gone," continued Conrad. "My dear Shannon, your eighteenth century Johann Semler's Rationalism is bourgeoning over here now! Always destructive; nothing creative, —even after a century and more! The sub-acid irritant is that our 'liberal' preachers and teachers always seem to fancy that they have evolved a new thing, essentially modern."

Hardy had risen now to go. "America seems to me to be in a kind of delirium, physically, morally, mentally, as I come back," he stopped to say. "Only don't catch a germ yourself, Conrad. Hard for a newspaper man to help it."

"I guess I know that all right, Hardy," and Conrad's face, the stimulus of his friend's presence withdrawn, settled into anxious lines.

As Hardy pursued his way along Fifth Avenue he stopped at the entrance to the Hotel Waldorf, for Dr. Hugh Gregg with his wife at that instant came down the steps and crossed to a waiting motor car. Theirs were the first faces of Peterboro friends which he had seen. Mrs. Gregg did not look in Hardy's direction. He observed that she was in heavy mourning, that her face was white and rigid in its frame of black. The Doctor looked grim and care-worn, but

smiled slightly as he recognized Hardy and by a gesture asked him to wait.

As she took her seat in the car Mrs. Gregg for the first time noted Hardy. She bowed slightly, without word or smile. The door was closed, the car moved away, Hugh Gregg standing at attention, hat in hand. He turned to Hardy then and taking him by the arm said:

"I would rather have a half hour with you on this particular day, Shannon, than with any man I know. Could you spare me that?"

"Perfectly well," was Hardy's response. Amy's new watch was safely tucked away in his pocket. His train time was an hour off. He was glad to meet Dr. Hugh. There would be much of common interest between them now.

The subject which was to occupy their half hour, however, brought a complete and most unwelcome surprise to the younger man. In a secluded corner of the café, lunch ordered, Hugh Gregg, leaning forward, elbows on the table, speaking low, opened this subject without preamble.

"Lyde only got to New York yesterday. I saw her last night for the first time in two years. She has come over from France simply for one purpose; to get a divorce from me. She will go back as soon as she gets it."

"How long since you returned?" asked Hardy, trying to cover a sharp shock. "I am only just back, myself. I know nothing of Peterboro people."

"Oh, I have been back six months. But I am no

longer of Peterboro. I have gone in with two New York City doctors. We have organized a firm,—orthopedic specialists. I live—just as it happens—I don't know where exactly. You knew of our loss. . . ."

"Yes. It was a sad blow."

With this allusion to the death of his son Hugh's face changed to a sudden curious likeness to the face of his father, an aspect which Hardy had never before detected. It was not merely a look of age. It was as if, by a swift chiselling away of the superfluous under the edge of sharp emotion, something finer and nobler appeared.

"I can't talk about that, Shannon. You will understand," he said in a broken undertone. "I am rather anxious now about poor little Dame . . . Dorothy . . . that is what we must call her now. Where she is to be . . . what is to become of her. . . . Her mother won't have her with her. . . . The home, you see, is broken up now."

"Some one wrote me a while ago that Dorothy was still at 17 Locust Street."

"Yes. She went to her grandfather's when Lyde decided to go to France. Things happened over there, Shannon. I think most of us worked out our innermost,—bad or good."

"I know what you mean."

"Of course you do. You couldn't help it. Luckily for you, I can see it in your face,—*your* innermost was good. . . . Well, let that pass. Lyde and I also have run true to form. Our standards are none too

lofty. She has been, since the armistice, and since my return home, staying on the Riviera, still entertaining invalid officers, as I understand. They would find her entertaining, I am sure."

"No doubt of that!"

"None whatever. She liked it,—much better than Peterboro. Also she particularly likes one officer, a British Major, with a title and a 'gentleman's estate' beside to the good. He came over just now on the ship with her. I had a glimpse of him last night here at the hotel, having arrived sooner than I was expected or wanted. Did you see Mrs. Gregg just now?"

"Yes. She did not look like herself some way."

"No. She has a new face—for me. I fancy the Major gets a different one. I am, of necessity, on a black, a very black list. Else where is the divorce coming from? Great Heavens, Shannon! I don't care a damn whether she gets a divorce or not. I am through with her. But it's the case she is trying to frame up against me that I won't stand for."

Hardy noted that, as he spoke, Hugh Gregg grew dark with suppressed passion. His mouth was stern set. He looked a formidable adversary for the small, fair-haired woman in black from whom he had just parted. And yet, a reflection of his fury, but colder and more cruel, had been in her face. Miserable tragedy mingled with yet more miserable comedy Hardy perceived was here.

"I am not saying," continued the Doctor after a pause, "that I have been blameless . . . that I have lived a celestial life through these two years.

But what I do say is that Lydia Gregg shall not mix up in her affairs and mine the name of a girl whose shoe-string she isn't fit to tie. . . . You know the girl."

Hardy stared. At first he had no guess. Then a sudden fear dawned.

"You cannot mean . . ."

"I mean Nancy Chance."

Gregg breathed rather than spoke the name. He read the hot protest in Hardy's eyes.

"Shannon, I am talking to you as if you were my father confessor. God knows I need one! Nancy Chance is as good and as pure a girl as . . . as Mary Minot!" this was added as if he had named the Virgin Mary. "I could slay the person, man or woman, who dares to say otherwise. She has had a life of terrific strain in her work as nurse over there in France. She has made good,—has fought a brave fight. It is true that she has lost something, it could not be otherwise, perhaps, something of delicacy and scrupulousness . . . prudishness anyway. But she is chaste as ice, pure as snow, and by Heaven! she shall escape calumny while I have a man's arm to strike with!"

"And Mrs. Gregg wishes to name her . . . in order to secure her divorce?"

"Precisely. And the bottom fact is I love the girl, have loved her since way back . . . before the war. And she knows it. Nancy, I mean, knows it. That makes it harder. For myself . . . I should, I admit, have gone down under manifold temptations.

For no doubt there were enough of them for us out there. That couldn't be helped. But the point is, Nancy could not be tempted. She is above and beyond me now, as she always has been. But here comes Lydia Gregg, daring to drag the girl down into the mud that so she may plunge through it to capture a title!"

Hardy Shannon's face was as stern now as Gregg's.

"It cannot be done." He spoke with all a strong man's decision. There was silence which seemed to throb perceptibly. The lunch lay untouched on the table between them. The waiter, discouraged, had betaken himself to the far end of the room.

"Lyde has gone to her lawyer's now," Dr. Hugh took up the word again, "with the understanding that, unless she absolutely, both in the legal relation and in private, gives up this ground for divorce, I shall contest it to the last ditch. She hates to draw back, for she hates Nancy,—has always been jealous of her. But she is in a hurry. She always is. And very possibly it may be now or never with the Major."

"When is it to be decided?"

"To-night. I shall allow her to claim a divorce on the ground of desertion, if she will agree to that. Of course, it is she who has done the deserting, but that is of no consequence. Otherwise a battle is before us. You are looking at your watch, Shannon. Our half hour is up, I am afraid."

Both men rose.

"It is an awful situation," murmured Hardy. "Tell me, can you see anything I can do?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the other wearily. "Perhaps you can nail some of Lydia's lies in Peterboro when you're there. The crux of it all, to me, after this matter of Nancy, is my little girl. If you could help me to find a way for her. . . . I am glad, in many ways, not to have her with Lyde. All the same it is hard on a child like that to know that her own mother doesn't desire her presence. I fancy she thinks Dorothy would make her seem middle-aged, matronly. She poses very well now as an ingénue, of sorts. Anyway, Dorothy can't find a home with her mother, nor with me as things are now. She is awfully forlorn, poor young one, there with Father and Mother, though she loves them both. But, I tell you one thing, Shannon. I am a long way from being a Christian man myself . . . perhaps never shall be or can be. . . . But after living through this hell which is war and this other hell which is our married life, I want my little girl . . . the only thing left me now . . . brought up in the Christian religion. If you can help me there . . . I shall be everlastingly grateful. . . . You see . . . it may not be scientifically demonstrable, this religion of yours . . . but I confess that I have found that . . . without it . . . the band is off."

XX

THE BAND BEING OFF

"WELL, Miss Nancy, I certainly am glad to see you!"

"Is this actually Hardy Shannon? I do not think I should have known you. Where did you come from? I didn't know you were in Peterboro. Only returned from the seashore yesterday myself. But how in the world could you get inside these locked doors, may I ask? I have heard no knock."

It was perceptible that Nancy Chance's pleasure in the sudden reunion was not unalloyed. Her glance roamed uneasily over the room, the assembly-room of the Mortals.

"I have kept my own key, to be sure," replied Hardy coolly. "Am I not a Mortal still?"

"What! You have kept that key these years? Did you carry it on your person through the trenches?" and Nancy essayed a careless laugh. "Do sit down, Captain Shannon. Or is it Parson Shannon now? Somebody said you were going to take on the Webster Street Church. I shouldn't think it would fit you particularly."

Nancy chattered on with now and again a covert motion of the hand or side glance of the eye, to

indicate manœuvers which she wished effected by her satellites. Plainly she was still the ruling spirit here. Hardy listened responsively, guarding well his own glances from faring afield.

When he had entered the Chambers, although the hour was early evening and apparently no prearranged festivity was forward, there were twenty or more young men and girls in the room. In the wide alcove two groups sat at card tables, wine-glasses before them, all hands smoking. Down at the far end of the main room a victrola was braying out jazz music to which, at the moment, a lively group were dancing with extraordinary freedom and abandon. At Nancy's motion the music now stopped and abruptly. The dancers, with loud laughter and ironical stares at the stranger, whose entering in seemed to have struck a new and unwelcome note, darted hither and yon to throw themselves upon various divans and easy chairs. This effected, they lolled unrestrainedly together, whispering and cuddling.

Dorothy Gregg, the only one to recognize Hardy Shannon, after a moment's hanging back, was moved by her instinct of good breeding to advance down the room to greet him. Hardy watched her approach, his mind alive with recollection of Hugh Gregg's recent outpouring of confidence. The Doctor had sent him a brief note of tidings a short time thereafter. Lydia Gregg had obtained her divorce on the ground of desertion, had been married in New York to her Major, Sir Thornton Armfield, and had sailed back to Europe.

Unlike the greater number of the girls present, they

being in evening costume of an extravagantly décolleté style, and displaying extravagant use of paint and powder, Dorothy wore a boyish suit of knickers with long, unbelted lines and many buttons, and her complexion was her own. She tossed away a cigarette as she approached and held out a light hand which Hardy took with unconcealed affection, a sense of something unspeakably pathetic in the bizarre little figure, still so like a marionette, rising within him. She seemed to him, however, now, as he looked in her face, no longer the futile, sophisticated, mechanically diverting little person he had once known. Rather she was a lost child, stripped of her mate, of her mother, father, home,—hanging forlorn on the fringes of a social fabric which had no need for her and no place.

His promise to Hugh Gregg to have an eye on his little girl was not needed to urge Dorothy's claim upon Hardy Shannon's sympathy.

"You always were a nice child," he said, drawing her to a seat beside him, "but growing up makes you nicer than ever, doesn't it, Miss Nancy?"

"Do I dare to sit down with you two old dears?" Dorothy broke in, vaguely surprised, Hardy felt, by his warmth. "This isn't a petting party, I take it, so I won't be butting in," and she laughed in her old mechanical fashion.

Nancy, seeking to hide her unease in the situation, now struck a line of accentuated bravado.

"How can you be such an old fogy, Dorothy, as to talk of petting parties? That is not the latest by a good deal. The world moves, Captain Shannon. Sit

down, dear infant. Why are you in knickers to-night?"

"I am in breeches, if you must know, because I'm not going to that old party every one else is," was Dorothy's answer in schoolgirl idiom. "Not going, because not invited."

"You can hardly make it clearer."

"Besides we keep early hours at our house. 'When little Ned was sent to bed she always acted right,' you know. Gracious! but I'm bored. . . . But cut that out. . . . When did you get back from the other side, Mr. Shannon?"

"In June. But I have been up in New Hampshire most of the time since. September always brings me back to Peterboro, you know," Hardy replied.

"Why, yes. But Sem. doesn't open for weeks yet. I know all about that. I move in strictly theological circles nowadays, you see."

"She has a strictly theological air, don't you think?" asked Nancy looking at Hardy.

"Well, I should say not more strictly theological than strictly fetching, myself. And I dare say you are still more fetching in citizen's dress, aren't you, Dorothy? This is very jolly though."

The girl, plainly puzzled, pursed her lips and shook her head for answer. Hardy was aware that both girls were on the lookout for disapproval on his part. A sudden thought flashed through his mind.

"Do you know where you would be a perfect fit and make a perfect hit, Dorothy?" he asked, bending towards the girl. He saw her lips tremble nervously.

"Did you ever hear of the ——— school, that famous Girls' School, up on the Hudson?"

"Well, rather. I guess every one has heard of that," she replied.

"Another question: did you ever hear of my cousin, foster-sister—*alter ego*,—anything you please,—Amy Shannon? You have, Miss Nancy?"

"Oh, yes. Mr. Conrad has raved about her to me. We are all guessing. You have been suspiciously reticent yourself. I judge she must be lovely."

Hardy coloured slightly.

"She is mighty nice, I think. Well—this is what I want to tell you—Amy has been a scholar in that school for three years, has just graduated. I have been up there often and it is really the most charming place of its kind I ever saw. I fell in love with all the teachers and most of the scholars."

"Tell us about it," cried Dorothy, wistful eagerness in her eyes. "How I wish Daddy could afford to send me there! I just ache to get away from this town."

"Dr. Gregg would send Dorothy there in a minute, or to be exact, in just about two weeks, if he knew she wanted to go. Wouldn't he, Miss Nancy?"

Nancy nodded her assent. Hardy felt a sudden holding aloof and could guess why.

"Of course he would. And there are my mother and Amy in Melrose, only an hour's journey or so, and they would be overjoyed to know you, Dorothy, and have you spend your week-ends at our house as often as you could. They would take you to New York,

too, once in a while. . . . What about it? Can I put it up to your father? You see we know the place so well. Can vouch for it."

Gradually, as he talked, Dorothy's face had changed through all its various acquired, and more or less conscious, phases to an expression of simple longing.

"Oh, if I could!" she said and tears sprang to her eyes. "If I could get out of all this," she added under her breath.

"You can, my dear," Nancy commented gravely.

"Oh, Nancy!" the girl cried, quickly, smitten with self-reproach. "I couldn't leave you. You need me, just a little, don't you, dear?"

Nancy smiled into the girl's eyes, indulgently, as towards a bit of capricious nonsense spoken, yet Hardy fancied, with something of peculiar sadness in her own face.

"I could see you often, you know. It seems to me Mr. Shannon has struck a wonderfully bright idea. I've been trying myself to decide what to do with you ever since I came home. But we shall have to talk about it elsewhere." The dancing with its accompanying jazz music was on again now.

"Dorothy, wait a minute," Nancy urged. "We haven't been the least bit hospitable. I'm ashamed. Bring the Captain anything you have." Then, turning to Hardy she asked with a touch of irony, "You can smoke now, can't you? One learns a thing or two in the years over-seas. It is to be hoped you have learned among other things to take a glass of wine also on occasion?"

Off flew Dorothy, not waiting for his answer.

Hardy, however, excused himself.

"I don't care for either, to tell you the truth, Nancy," he replied. At this use of her name the girl's cheeks flushed. Had he not heard yet what people said of her? It was an odd time for a man in his position to take an onward step towards friendship. But what if he were minded to try to do her good? Or—what if he were moving to separate Dorothy from her? Struck by these possibilities Nancy's defiance stiffened. Hardy felt it.

He had the chance now, which he wanted, to observe Nancy more closely. Disturbing, distorting changes in her were already obvious enough. But, knowing what he knew, her recklessness, hardness, defiance even, seemed inevitable. Three days in Peterboro had been enough to convince him that she was being sent to Coventry systematically by the people of her father's church as well as by Peterboro society in general. Small doubt Lydia Gregg had taken her reprisals before she left the country! His indignation mounted with the thought. Of what consequence was it that Nancy's present attitude, these surroundings she had chosen, were in the last degree repugnant to him? What she suffered behind her mask was what concerned him. But how to pierce to the reality? . . . That was the question. Hardy instinctively hastened to speak lest Nancy should say things to make his way more difficult.

"I went to your house to-night, hoping to see you."

"And my grandmother sent you over here?" Nancy laughed sarcastically with the question.

"Not exactly. I was not struck by her being especially keener for the Club than of old. But we did not discuss that."

"I suppose you discussed me and my shortcomings. They seem to be especially interesting lately."

"You don't suppose anything of the sort," Hardy returned bluntly, the sternness of which he was capable coming into his face. Then, laughing a little, "We discussed my great and glorious part in the war for a while. Then your father came in and gave me the welcome of my life, I might say."

"I'm glad to hear it," Nancy spoke more gently.

"And I was tremendously flattered for he asked me to take on the work I used to do in All Souls' Church. Mighty good of him!"

"I hope you will. What is it about that Webster Street Church?"

"They've invited me to serve as pastor and preacher while I am going on with my course in the Seminary and I have accepted."

"Preaching every Sunday? Leading mid-week meetings, calling on old tabbies, presiding over pink teas, and studying theology at the same time? Won't that be burning the candle at several ends?"

"I don't think so." Rising, "I've got to go on now. When can we have a 'heart-to-heart talk' as it were? I've got oceans of things to ask or to tell."

Nancy gave him her hand and with it a softened look.

"You think so now," she said briefly. "The Peyton School is to reopen this Fall. Have you heard that? Mary Minot is coming back."

"Is she? That's good. When?"

"Some time before October. Good-night, Captain Shannon."

With one last view of the strange scene, the barbaric music, the barbaric dancing of scantily clad girls grappled by hot-eyed men, the smoking, the lawless drinking and the obvious gambling, Hardy came away, a sentence which he had read somewhere repeating itself persistently in his mind, "We won the war, but seemingly we lost all that we were fighting for."

Yes, the band was off.

On the same September day which brought Hardy Shannon into touch once more with the Mortals in Peterboro, Amy Shannon sat alone in the afternoon under the elm trees at the edge of the tennis court in Melrose.

A book lay in her lap open, even Elinor Dane's *Soul in Arms,* but Amy's occupation in chief was that of watching the flight of time. This was always a pleasing exercise since Hardy had put her in possession of a wrist watch, but it was not Hardy with whom the flight of time was just now connected. From Melrose to Peterboro was a very long way,—six hours at best. No use in hoping to see him.

Amy had been very grateful to Hardy for her watch. In June she had been particularly pleased when he, her handsome "brother," came up to the school bearing

gifts,—the picture of a gallant soldier, ruffling the dovecotes to good effect.

What Amy had not liked was Hardy's telling her that he could not be present at the graduation ceremonies which were to take place a fortnight later. She had secretly hoped that on that occasion their engagement would be announced and with something of a flourish, both high contracting parties present. This last, Hardy had convinced her, could not be. She could announce their engagement when she pleased. But the first claim upon him just now was his mother's need of his presence and care. Monadnock was too far away for him to dash back and forth for a day's doings. Their financial situation called for a new and strict economy. To all of which Amy had listened reluctantly and to it she had responded with alternating pouting and pensiveness. But she had found Hardy immovable. Their tryst ended on a certain note of reserve.

But Amy had not been left friendless and unsponsored for the great event of graduation, after all. One member of the Shannon family, one upon whom she had reckoned not at all, even Park, wrote to her one mid-June day to ask if she would permit him to attend the exercises as her fatherly, cousinly, brotherly, any-old friend,—whichever she preferred or all combined.

Amy jumped at the chance, since better might not be. Better, of course, being Hardy, so much younger, so much more gallant and good to look upon. But

when Park had arrived upon the scene, well-dressed, well-groomed and well-humoured, she had been surprised to find him, after all, a good deal of a winner. He had so far yielded to American customs as to sacrifice his beard, a change which Amy considered revolutionary. For he no longer looked like a German, still less like a married man. She decided on the spot that wife and child for this day only were irrelevant, and to be withdrawn from notice. Tacitly Park accepted her decision, in like manner ignoring her engagement to his brother.

Amy had no idea that it was in her cousin to make the impression of positive distinction which had been voiced on every side. The tradition of his house of gentleness and courtesy was all to the fore. To the teachers he was deferential, chivalrously attentive. To the girls he gave that delicious thrill which only a man gives who is slightly, oh, very slightly, wicked. He said such daring things and looked things unsaid so much more daring!

The dance with which the day's festivities closed tipped the scales incontestably for Park. Hardy could dance, but he didn't dance if he could help it, and well Amy knew that he was in no dancing humour just now. She had dreaded the reaction of that new sorrow which sat so steadily on his face. What if he were to decline altogether to dance? This question had shadowed her anticipation of her great day so long as Hardy had figured in it as hero. Hence Park, as substitute, bringing no sorrow, brought no small relief. Furthermore,

he proved to be an excellent and tireless dancer, also perfectly *en rapport* with the dances just then and there most in vogue.

All in all Amy's schoolgirl sun had set in a blaze of glory.

There had followed six weeks in camp in the Catskills after which, the manse being reopened and Mrs. Shannon returned, Amy came home to Melrose. Hardy came with his mother, but was obliged to hasten away on various speaking and preaching engagements. And now he was already, although a mere seminary student still, settled as pastor over some small church in Peterboro, Amy never could remember the name of it. Altogether Hardy had become quite remote, no longer in the foreground of her mind. Park she saw much more of. He retained his bachelor quarters in New York where he was always vastly and cryptically occupied with some momentous "literary work." But after his mother's and Amy's return he spent each week-end in Melrose, usually arriving on Saturday.

Amy realized now, reluctantly, as she sat alone on the lawn, that there was little use in expecting to see Park this afternoon. And yet—he had been known to appear on a Friday. . . . It would be great if it should happen to-day!

Mrs. Shannon, being far from well, spent much time alone of necessity, in her own room or in the adjoining study, the outer door of which was now kept locked. Naturally, Amy found these summer days incredibly long. Besides, there was that letter from

Germany waiting for Park on the table in the hall. It had come this forenoon but she had decided "all by herself" not to remail it, lest it might be working at cross purposes should Park be on his way to Melrose. But if he did not come until Saturday he might be cross to her about it. . . .

The letter was from Agatha. Amy knew her handwriting and heartily disliked its stiff slant. It was something, however, that she no longer addressed Park on the envelope as *Hoch wohl-geboren!* Amy wondered how Park could really have fallen in love with a woman who looked like that photograph. But while she thus wondered a shadow fell across the turf and Park himself strolled down to her place, the letter from Germany in his hand.

He vouchsafed scant response to Amy's delighted greeting and, having thrown himself into one of the lawn chairs with a muttered expletive regarding "this atrocious American weather," proceeded to tear open his letter. He did this, Amy observed, with an air of ill-suppressed violence which so trivial an action hardly seemed to justify.

As he read on, turning page after page, for the letter was a long one, the scowl on his brow deepened, his colour seemed to darken. Amy's curiosity changed to a strain of anxious expectation. Something fierce had happened, or was going to happen! Of that she was convinced.

Park glanced up at last.

"After all," he said with biting curtness, "Agatha was a Liberty Loan."

"What can you mean, Park?" Amy begged.

"Oh, simply she has decided to avail herself of her privileges. She retained her liberty as I did mine. Our idea of marriage was lending, not giving. Trial marriage when you come right down to it. She got tired of it first, got tired of an absentee husband. Also, I labour under the disadvantage of being only a veneered, near-German article. She wants the genuine thing in husbands. *Echt Deutsch.* And there you are!"

"Do you mean that Agatha wishes to separate from you?"

"She *has* separated from me."

There followed a silence which Amy was too timid to break. She had never been trained in the etiquette of a situation like this.

"A bit awkward, is it not?" Park commented presently. "Probably old Lechler will sack me now. No knowing! But what I care for most is Lieschen not Agatha."

"What about her?"

"Agatha writes that having found her true affinity, a man whom she can reverence as, it seems, she has never been able to reverence me, she has put little Lieschen in a *Stift* and has gone with his reverence to Sicily, the heavenly home of all German lovers,—for an indefinite stay."

"What is a *Stift?*"

"Oh, an institution of one kind or another. Infant asylum this one, I suppose. Look here! I'll pour some poison into that girl's veins!" with which Park

broke away, crumpling the letter furiously in his hand and starting for the house.

At the opening of the garden path he stopped, then turned and slowly retraced his steps. When he reached Amy's chair he bent over, patted her head gently, then lifted her chin and looked into her eyes.

"What, tears?" he asked.

"It seems so sad . . . about the dear little baby . . ." murmured Amy brokenly.

"It is sad," Park answered. "But you may be sure I shan't leave her long in any old *Stift*. I shall wind things up here now in short order, and take the first steamer I can for the Continent. But I've got to hustle like mad. Amy, you're a good little girl. I'm sorry I was so savage. Strictly speaking you are not to blame for Agatha's behaviour. Forgive me for raging at you. I had to rage at somebody. . . . And Amy, I must ask you one thing as a personal favour."

"What is it?"

"That this news from Berlin shall be known to no one but you and me. I insist that Mother shall not have it to worry about. Mind you don't write of it to Hardy," this severely.

"Of course I won't."

"All right. Give me your hand upon it. That's a good little girl. The touch of your hand tames me. I can calm down now."

"I am so glad," murmured Amy with a wistful smile.

"I declare I'll wait about telling Agatha what I

think of her. Time enough for that," exclaimed Park, after a moment of steady thinking. "It would be much nicer to sit out here for a while now with sweet little you. I'll go up to the house and get a bunch of proof I must rush through as fast as possible now, and come back and work here. Will you wait for me?"

Amy nodded her head. She felt her heart swell with a curious sensation. It touched her that Park found consolation in her presence in an hour like this. She could not remember having produced a like effect hitherto in her short life. Park seemed to understand her better than other people . . . far better than Hardy. . . .

A few moments later Park established himself in an armchair facing Amy's. A garden table was drawn before him and upon this was spread a sheaf of long, narrow, printed slips of paper. As he bent over them, pencil in hand, concentration in his eyes, Park glanced up at her, and, as if answering the question he met, said:

"Proof, *mein liebes Kind,* page proof of a new and important work, but one which is a state secret. Between you and me, Amy! Mind you keep still about it! And don't you dare to peek, either. Go on with your book. I'll go on with mine."

XXI

FIRST AID TO THE INJURED

WHEN Hardy Shannon left the abode of the Mortals on that same September evening he did a bit of thinking all by himself on a bench in one corner of the Peterboro down-town green. As a result, he betook himself to the offices of the Telephone and Telegraph Company hard by. Here he carried on some rapid-fire business, beginning with a prolonged conference with Dr. Hugh Gregg in New York and ending in Melrose with the Shannons. The outcome of all this was that arrangements were set on foot for Dorothy Gregg to enter the school from which Amy Shannon had recently graduated. Mrs. Shannon and Amy were requisitioned to give instant encouragement to the enterprise by letter to Dorothy, as also to offer the hospitalities of the Melrose household to the solitary girl.

As he left the telegraph office Hardy ran over the situation; — Dorothy Gregg must leave Peterboro where nobody was able to look after her properly, and where she was forlorn, irresponsible and reckless. So much was clear. Nancy Chance might have controlled circumstances just now in a way to keep Dorothy safe under her own wing and as happy and wholesome as might be. But here was the rub! These two, in view of the hateful rumours now rife in Peterboro, were

better apart than together for Nancy's name's sake. And, this being the consideration which hit Hardy Shannon hardest, even more urgent was the demand for a separation for Dorothy's sake. Nancy was doing the girl only harm, being herself on a perilous margin. He was sure she recognized this herself, but she ought to have been strong enough even for a testing like the present one. Why wasn't she?

Hardy passed in quick review the nature of Nancy's environment. He could guess her bitter scorning of the social circle in which she had grown up,—the people who could now so easily accept Lydia Gregg's insinuations against her. He had perceived from the first the lack of sympathy between Madame Chance and the girl, and he had gradually come to perceive how slight was the influence for good exerted over her by Dr. Chance himself. Too keenly Nancy had pierced beneath the camouflage of her father's high-sounding interpretations of the "larger ministry" and the "Social Gospel" to the underlying spiritual vacuity, to the instinct for the latest modes of thought, for passing fashions in theological clothing, in place of the power of the divine indwelling.

Who was there that could give Nancy the spiritual succour of which she stood in need? Who was there who could approach the girl availingly . . . whose approach she would not repel and resent? Who indeed but Mary Minot? This, with sudden illumination, Hardy recognized. Because Mary loved her and believed in her she could help her. Also because Mary loved and believed in God.

The thing was decided in that moment. Mary Minot must be on the spot if possible without a day's delay. To be sure a fortnight, as he knew, must elapse before the Peyton School would open. No matter for that. Some one would take Mary in! Who wouldn't, for that matter, having the chance?

With quick impulse Hardy turned back to the office and sent a telegram to Annisdale, to Mary Minot, which read:

Come to Peterboro at once if possible. Remember our agreement February 1918. There is something to do. Wire when I may meet you at train.

As he hurried on his way now to the Webster Street church, and his small pastor's study there, Hardy was glad that he had such a refuge. He need not, in his present complexities, encounter his fellow-students at the Seminary. They were in the main strangers to him and they seemed very much younger than himself. He missed Conrad grievously, others also, his chosen comrades, now scattered. Some had died on the field of battle.

He had stood by one of his own classmates in the hour of death, and by his grave, far off now, on the fields of France. Hardy was conscious that the period of his absence from Peterboro had worked changes in his own spirit and temper out of proportion to the actual length of it. The door was shut, and shut hard on his boyhood. Even his prospective studies, as he began to look into the year's course, took on an ineffectual, irrelevant quality. To what end should he delve

in subtleties of Reinterpretation of Protestantism or of the Psychology of Religion, when the world was starving for the very Bread of Life?

He had said as much to Douglas Gregg and his impatience had been met by the old Professor's disciplined tolerance. This man could never be negligible or lightly turned aside. They two were no nearer together as concerned the supreme values, but the man himself remained the typical scholar, merciless indeed in his methods, but, to his own consciousness, merciless only in the interest of "truth."

Already Hardy had found himself cordially, even affectionately, welcomed back by Mrs. Gregg and her husband to the intimacies of their house. A certain pathos investing these two persons, of which he had been dimly aware aforetime, touched him now afresh. He could guess that a degree of isolation had overtaken them by reason of Douglas Gregg's German sympathies, silent though he had been regarding them after America entered the war. But far deeper than this was the stamp of pain and anxiety set upon their faces by the tragic breaking up of Doctor Hugh's family. Altogether the war had cast a deepening shadow over 17 Locust Street to Hardy's perception.

As he moved on down the humble, narrow street to his humble, narrow church, a sudden sense of thankfulness sprang up in Shannon's heart with the sense of the ministry given him here to simple souls with their simple needs.

The cheap commonplaces of the small wooden church itself were emphasized by a sharp electric light opposite.

The squat tower, by no means "without a counterpart," he could endure, since it enclosed his own monastic cell of a study. It was the terrors of the coloured glass window above the main door which at times gave him something like an esthetic spasm. But that was not so bad when you were on the outside, he reflected. Why was the church door open? A number of persons, girls as far as he could see, were coming out, singly and in groups.

Hardy remembered now that he had given out notice on Sunday of a meeting of the Girls' Club. Yes, it was to-night. He slowed down a little in his pace, instinctively shrinking at the moment from becoming involved in an impromptu social occasion on the church steps. By the time he reached that point the girls had filed past him with their shy smiles and fluttered greetings. The church door still stood open and, as he entered and advanced to the foot of the tower stairway, he observed a light in a small committee room at the end of the corridor. With the thought that the light had been left burning by accident he stepped to the door. Before a desk on which she was arranging papers stood Mary Minot.

For an instant Hardy stood transfixed in the doorway, for a blinding light seemed to him to encompass the girlish figure, the emanation, he knew, of his own sharp sensation. But with it came trembling. Mary, perceiving his presence and less taken by surprise than he, came forward, which seeing, Hardy stretched both arms as if to enfold her, then, as he met the question in her eyes, his arms fell. With a hasty gesture, as of

one who seeks to brush a gathering mist from his eyes, Hardy spoke her name, then greeted her with forcible attempt at a reasoned cordiality. All of which availed them nothing, for in that moment eyes and souls had met and each knew the other's secret. Only Mary did not know the reason why he could not speak and so wondered.

Presently Hardy found words but words to his own consciousness so far below the reality as to be almost meaningless, hence permissible.

"Your photograph has gone with me wherever I have gone,—over-seas. . . . Elinor Dane gave it to me."

"Yours has been with me wherever I have been since you went over-seas," Mary answered quickly. Shyness was inconsequent at this moment. "Elinor Dane gave it to me."

"Come here. Let us sit down."

Hardy drew Mary by the hand to a bench. He was master of himself again. He knew that he loved this girl, he dared to think that she loved him. Nothing else seemed worth knowing. And this being so, to keep his troth with Amy would be an act, not of faith, but of sacrilege. But to declare his love for Mary while his pledge was held by his cousin would be still greater sacrilege. He must wait.

"Elinor Dane was merciful to us," he said very gently as he sat down beside Mary. "Tell me about her. I missed finding Mrs. Eliot when I called there and only learned that Miss Dane is no longer in Peterboro."

"She is back at her work in Revere College, almost wholly restored to health. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Is her new book as great a success as *The Stars in their Courses?* I like it even better."

"Oh, yes. It has been simply the best thing that ever happened. Especially to me!" and Mary laughed in the gay, childlike fashion which Hardy loved. How lovely her face was while she spoke! Almost irresistible the impulse became to take her in his arms and let her know the passion surging through him.

"Did you get my telegram?" he asked laughing whimsically.

"Your telegram? Where did you send it?"

"To Annisdale."

"When?"

Hardy consulted his watch.

"To be precise, twenty-three minutes ago."

"Could I get it, then?" Mary cried.

"Certainly. You ought to have received it by telepathy. When two people are in perfect rapport those things happen. So I am able to perceive, psychically, you see, that your attitude towards me is not all that I could wish. Is it?" and Hardy, daring now to play with a situation which seemed about to dawn in sudden rapture, looked steadily into the girl's eyes. Mary blushed but her eyes bore his look unflinchingly.

"Please tell me in plain English what you telegraphed me for or about," she said, withdrawing the hand which unconsciously to both had rested in his until now.

"To come to Peterboro."

"Very well. I came to Peterboro last night."

"Why did you not let me know, as you ought?"

"It was not your business to know."

"Oh, yes, it was. I am your pastor now. Didn't you know that? And I say unto this one go and he goeth and to that one come and she cometh. It is all right, you were simply a little oversensitive psychically. You came because I needed you, in reality, but why did you fancy yourself coming? Your school does not open, I am credibly informed, until a week from next Wednesday."

"Miss Peyton sent for me to come, at very short notice, too. She needed me to help her with reorganizing, correspondence, oh, lots of things, none of which you care about in the very least."

"Quite true. You haven't seen Nancy Chance, of course?" Hardy was suddenly grave.

"I have seen no one. I telephoned to Nancy this evening before I came here to meet the girls, but the maid who answered said she was not at home. Was it on her account you telegraphed?" Mary rose as she asked the question.

Hardy rose also, sudden perception of pastoral proprieties entering his mind. He had no farther need of the refuge of his study to-night. He and Mary had every right to walk to the Peyton School together. They had done it before. And with a difference. Conrad and Amy had both stood between them then. Now, Hardy realized, it was Amy alone. And he shrewdly guessed that Amy might have been in love a dozen times since she had revealed her sudden ardours

for himself. Just then he felt that he should not take the entanglement with his cousin too seriously.

But the long walk was devoted exclusively to discussion of Nancy Chance and her difficulties. Hardy must needs give Mary some idea of the impression which the proceedings observed by him among the Mortals had made upon him. Here he found Mary able to clarify the situation. She had been more or less in touch with Nancy before her return from Europe in the early Spring and since that time. She knew that in long visits with friends in Paris and London, after the armistice, Nancy had become somewhat inured to the lawlessness of social life following the war. The things which had struck him just now as shameless indecencies in dancing and drinking, in dress and in manners, had become commonplaces, however unwelcome, to Nancy. Convinced at last that Mary knew whereof she spoke, Hardy could respond only by a groan at which they both laughed.

Mary continued to fill up the gaps in Hardy's comprehension of the hard situation for Nancy. Together they sought to devise ways and means by which it might be softened.

"This is the only way I can see to help," declared Mary with sudden resolution after a long pause in their talk. "I will cast myself on Nancy's mercy. I will call her up this very night, tell her I am miserable, as I really am, in all the confusion now on at the school; that I rather need to get away from it for evenings and nights at least. I will ask her if she thinks her grandmother would take me in. Probably she will."

"Well, rather," exclaimed Hardy with emphasis.

"If it works, I will spend all the time with Nancy that Miss Peyton's affairs and her own engagements will let me. I will do my best to lighten the clouds around her, but, believe me, I have no smallest idea of trying to *influence* Nancy. That would be quite beyond me. Simply, I am bound to have her realize how truly she is loved and believed in."

"So am I! Now let's see what two of us can do!"

A fortnight later Hardy Shannon stood at the door of 17 Locust Street. It was five o'clock of the Thursday afternoon, and this was his second visit of the day. Seminary work was now in full swing, but he had broken away from his engagements there to get Dorothy Gregg started on her journey to New York. At three o'clock he had come with a cab and conveyed her to the station where they were met by Mary Minot and Nancy. Dorothy's departure was given festive complexion and Doctor Hugh would meet her in New York, and take her with him to his hotel. On the following morning he would see her satisfactorily established at her school.

Hardy thought he had never seen a change in any person so marked as that which he had observed that day in Dorothy. The unmeaning gaiety had given place to simple contentedness; while something almost akin to a girlish dignity had succeeded to the peculiar restlessness which he had always found tiresome in her, as in her mother.

It had been a broken and confusing day for Hardy, but as he entered the Gregg dwelling now with the familiarity of one desired and expected, he felt a sense of ease, a glow of satisfaction at heart which for a long period had not visited him. For the change in Nancy Chance, as he had seen her just now, was perhaps not less than the change in Dorothy. There was a gravity about the girl, to be sure, little short of sadness, but the defiance and bitterness which had disturbed him were missing. Mary Minot had exorcised those evil spirits, he thought, just as he had believed she could. She had delivered Nancy from the clutch of desperation and revolt in which he had found her. Perhaps it was by dint of prayer and fasting, but anyway it had been done. Lift up your hearts! We lift them up, oh Lord!

Almost on his lips were these words when Hardy heard a step behind him and a voice saying:

"One moment, if you please!"

The postman had reached the house and spoke quickly to catch his attention before he should close the door. Hardy, with gay greeting, held out his hand and received a paper or two, letters for Mrs. Gregg, and a thin book addressed to her husband.

"Ah, you are back!" exclaimed Douglas Gregg himself, standing in his study door as Hardy entered. How still the place was! Nothing fluttered anywhere! You would know Dorothy was gone, lock, stock and barrel, it seemed to him.

"Mighty good of you to come back and tell my wife how the child got off," the Professor added. "No

slightest need of it, of course, but . . . You will certainly stay to supper."

"I wanted to come back, sir. Dorothy had a regular ovation from those girls before the train left. They brought such a lot of flowers and favours, why, you would have thought little Dorothy was a bride at least, if not several. I wouldn't miss telling Mrs. Gregg about it. No, I really mustn't stay to supper. I haven't been in my room since eight o'clock this morning and there will be letters and things to see to."

"Sorry for that," returned Gregg, glancing with a touch of curiosity at the mail packages handed him. "You know you always have a welcome here."

"But may I run up and see Mrs. Gregg now and tell her my story?" asked Hardy. "All right. And I can take her letters up, sir, if you like."

Gregg handed Hardy back the letters, then, as the young man bounded up the staircase two steps at a time, he returned to his study.

A half hour later Hardy came, light of foot, down to the lower hall, his mission of cheer and enlivenment of the invalid accomplished. But his effort to make his exit from the house so silent as not to disturb the Professor was vain, for, as he took his hat from its place, he was startled to see the study door wide open and Gregg standing on the threshold with eyes fixed upon him. He held something in his hand. The startling thing was the chill which seemed to have fallen upon the old scholar in the moments since Hardy had left him in cordial well-being and good-fellowship.

"I will ask you to look here a moment, Shannon."

The summons came abrupt and cold, although the voice lacked its usual steadiness. What could it mean? Hardy hastened to his side, almost in alarm.

"I must trouble you to look at this." As he spoke Gregg held out a thin book, well-bound, gilt-lettered, fresh from the press as it appeared. With an icy edge to his voice which made Hardy involuntarily shiver he added:

"You doubtless are familiar with this . . . production," a falling cadence as of measureless contempt on the last word.

In unqualified perplexity Hardy handed the book back to the Professor a moment later. Both men were white as they faced each other. Hardy could not have told the title so dazed was he by sight of his brother's name on the cover as author. He had turned one leaf only. It bore dedication by Park Shannon to Douglas Gregg as *"My Master who opened my way into the Larger Liberty."*

Mischief of some kind brewing here! Small doubt of that.

Gregg stood, plainly waiting for word of explanation from Hardy. The book had dropped from his hand, but the hand which had held it shook. The silence which followed seemed to Hardy interminable. He could find nothing to say.

"I believe it is only fair to remember, Shannon," began the Professor at long last, "that you served notice on me when you first came to Peterboro that you purposed to fight against that for which I stand. I hardly looked for this particular species of warfare,

however. . . ." He turned away, with a slight gesture as of dismissal. "Good-night."

"I have never seen or heard of this book, sir, or of any plan or purpose connected with it, Professor Gregg, until this moment," Hardy broke out, his consternation finding words as he saw himself dismissed.

"We will leave explanations until to-morrow, if you please, sir. Good-night." With which the study door was closed.

XXII

THE PARTING SHOT

ON reaching his room in Palfrey Hall Hardy found lying on his desk a duplicate of the book just received by Douglas Gregg.

With sight and perception quickened to a pitch perhaps never known by him before, he raced through the book. It was well printed, and although published by a notoriously radical house, its appearance was of a dignified simplicity. In gilt letters on the dark green cover was printed the title:

Two Modernist Epoch-Makers
A Monograph
By Park Shannon, Ph. D.

The book was dedicated, as Hardy already knew, "To the Reverend Douglas Gregg, D. D., LL. D.," etc.

Dismay grew as Hardy read the brief prefatory note in which the author, in mentioning his obligation to various scholars and authorities, stated that he was under especial obligation to his brother, Captain Hardy Shannon, A. E. F. —— Division, for the contribution of a copy of the ancient and almost forgotten work on Johann Semler by Henke, discovered by him in Cologne, as also for helpful suggestions regarding the parallelism between Semler and Douglas Gregg.

Biting back his mounting wrath, Hardy read on.

The opening paragraphs gave token at once of a practised hand in the use of English; of strong and bold instinct of attack; above all of a cynical audacity in the shaping and colouring of facts, untrammelled by considerations of conscience.

Germany, as the acknowledged seat of the highest scientific scholarship, was exalted as having led the way out from the bondage of Traditionalism into the freedom and light of Reason. The way by which this "glorious" intellectual and ecclesiastical emancipation had broken its way was commonly known as the Higher Criticism, albeit inaccurately.

By this branch of scholarship the servile submission of the human mind and reason to the yoke of Dogma had been broken. Such dogmas as those of divine Inspiration, divine Revelation, divine Incarnation, had now been done away. The sway of superstition, myth and legend had given place to the guidance of human reason. The designation "Rationalism," although deprecated by timid minds, should be welcomed as accurately descriptive of the new conception.

The writer proceeded to bring forward two men who, although separated in time by more than a century, widely separated also by nationality and language, were fellow-workers in the cause of Rational Religion. These two great scholars, each in his own nation and generation, had right to a like title;—the one was fittingly known as Father of German Rationalism, the other must in the future be recognized as Father of American Rationalism. The first was Johann Semler, 1725–1791,—Professor of Theology

in the University of Halle; the second, Douglas Gregg, Professor of Biblical Interpretation in the Divinity School of Peterboro. And between these two men existed a profound spiritual relation. For, as would appear later, the American scholar had received the purpose and inspiration of his life-work in Germany, from German critical scholarship, and this branch of learning had sprung generations earlier from the powerful initiative of Semler. His debt to German genius was never overlooked by Gregg. Even after the air was filled with the noise of imminent war to be waged on Germany by the United States, he had declared in fearless frankness his loyalty to the Fatherland,—this publicly, in his own classroom.

Hardy Shannon gave a muttered exclamation as he read. Must this spectre be raised again to work mischief? And how could Park have got wind of it save through some chance mention of his own in the family at Melrose?

The story of Semler's life and work followed. Only too well could Hardy divine its value as type for that which was to follow.

Semler, as described by the writer, was "at once a teacher of scepticism and an example of piety." He first dared impugn the ancient dogma of inspiration of the Bible and proclaim its end; he was first to urge the use of purely natural, scientific methods of study, to reject the authority of the Scripture Canon, the correctness of the Biblical text, its authority and historicity. He first discovered in it error, delusion, partisan purposes, misconceptions of ignorance and

superstition everywhere present. The note of free and fearless destructive criticism thus first sounded by Johann Semler cleared the way for the "Sacred Books" to be studied as fallible and legendary, with Reason alone as Master and Material Facts alone as Authority. As Semler's test of the value of the Christian religion was solely the measure of natural human welfare produced by it, he could be described correctly as a Utilitarian or Benevolent Hedonist. Incontestably his doctrines led the way to acceptance of the philosophy which frankly concedes that matter and the motions of matter constitute the sum total of human existence.

What followed in Germany?

The foundations of German Protestantism were shaken, never again to stand as before. A group of spirits, yet bolder than Semler, carried his teachings to their logical conclusions. Certain of these aroused in the Pioneer himself fantastic and even remorseful fears. He is said to have died broken-hearted, and has even been likened to a Frankenstein who has summoned a monster into being whose death-dealing powers he is helpless to control. This, naturally, by his opponents.

Indisputable the fact that from Semler's crowded classrooms at Halle there went forth, towards the close of the eighteenth century, a legion of Rationalist teachers and preachers who filled the influential chairs and pulpits of Germany. The seed was sown and the harvest manifold. Never again could the enfranchised Protestant German mind bow to the authority of what

is incorrectly styled Revealed Religion. The ill-considered enterprise of Foreign Missions, from which Luther wisely drew back, incidentally received a blow from which it had not recovered. As is well known, in the last quarter of Semler's century, early German Missions died out under the influence of the new scientific conceptions.

With what became actual physical pain at his heart Hardy Shannon read on. He found the parallel which he expected drawn between the temperamental qualities of Semler and Gregg. Both were men of exemplary personal life, of reverent and devout habit of mind; both were loyal in their allegiance to the Authority of materially demonstrated Facts; both were pledged to follow the Light of Reason alone and did so follow, as far as the limitations of their time, their heredity and their temperament allowed.

Gregg was described as a man of commanding intellectual powers, fertilized by years of study in Germany, above all by coming under the influence of the great Wellhausen. And upon Wellhausen himself, as the writer knew through his own intercourse with that famous German scholar, Douglas Gregg had, as a student, made a marked and unforgotten impression. No doubt Wellhausen had a presentiment that here was the Prophet of the New Day for the New World.

Gregg brought back to his own country,—where scholarship such as had flourished for a century in Germany was then unknown,—the torch of the new philosophy and the Higher Learning. He opened the eyes of those who flocked around him for instruction.

They awoke to perceive the dwarfing fetters that they wore, to recognize the Bible for the mosaic of fact and fiction, legend and fallacy that it is. He set men free. And those thus emancipated had gone out through the land carrying with them the unconquered and unconquerable Germanic genius to inspire the New World with new and larger than political liberty,—the liberty of the spirit.

The author proceeded to narrate his own course of action when preparing for the present unpretending study. He had sent out letters to a large number of men now occupying prominent American pulpits and professorships,—men in mid life, men of modern mind, eminent as teachers of rational religion. In those letters he had asked the definite question, What American scholar now living has influenced you most in your acceptance of advanced philosophic thought, involving the rejection of the supernatural?

He had now in hand answers to this question by more than fifty leading preachers and teachers who unqualifiedly acknowledged their supreme indebtedness in this regard to Douglas Gregg. Many of these men had come into personal touch with his teachings in the classroom. His books had carried conviction where the personal contact had been lacking.

"And the end is not yet. There remains in America yet very much land to be possessed by the modern spirit which has inspired these two heroic standard-bearers. There is danger that the relics of a worn-out belief in the supernatural may yet hold American scholars back from acknowledgment of the Actual as

sole Arbiter of Truth. There is no need of an incarnation when the truth of the essential oneness in the universe of the two concepts of divine and human is accepted. The new note of religion is the Welfare of the Common Man. What remains is for each man to achieve his own God, or, in other words, his own ethic, from his inner consciousness, led by the light of science.

"The Bible as purely human literature, to be scientifically dissected, and taken for what scientific analysis proves it,—and nothing more. This is Germany's message to the modern world, conceived by Johann Semler at the close of the eighteenth century, conveyed from Germany to America at the close of the nineteenth century by Douglas Gregg."

With this Park Shannon's work ended.

What had Park done? What had he tried to do? Trembling and breathless, as the slender book dropped from his hand, Hardy queried. Where, in this tissue of facts and falsities, could the former be said to end and the latter to begin? There *was* a resemblance between Douglas Gregg and Semler. Was it not imaginable that Gregg might welcome the parallel drawn between them, Semler being so generally accepted (a fact which Hardy now understood) as the great Pioneer of the Radical Critics? No—it was unimaginable, as Park had interpreted and set forth the parallel and what it connoted. Something sinister belonged to every word and line. . . .

There was the perverse misrepresentation of himself in Park's Foreword. He to be named as collaborating

in the work! Great Heavens! . . . But, after all, at this moment that was negligible. The effect upon Douglas Gregg was Hardy's absorbing anxiety. Never before had he seen the venerable teacher dominated by a passion of resentment. Its working was palpable though cold and still. Park's shafts, whether of malice, or of childish mischief, or of calculated craft, had pierced the outer defences and entered the inner citadel of Gregg's consciousness, the man's hidden sense of himself. Was that what Park had meant to do?

Some one knocked. For a moment Hardy stared at the door, not recognizing the sound as having relation to himself. Then he heard his own voice, but a voice which he could not recognize, in response. One of his classmates came in, a man whose room was next to his.

"Ah, Shannon, you are back at last," he commented, eying him a little curiously, and holding out a telegram which Hardy took with indifference. "This despatch was left with me just before noon. I have knocked at your door half a dozen times. . . ."

"Oh, thank you, thanks awfully." Hardy repeated the words parrot-like, nothing seeming of importance but to gain a few more minutes in which to be alone and still. That the despatch might have some immediate claim on his attention did not occur to him until the door was shut, and, rather to his surprise, he perceived that it still lay on the arm of his chair. When he had opened the telegram his first act was to look at his watch; his second to lay hands on coat and

hat and hurry from the building, stopping only as he passed his desk, to snatch up a small pile of letters which had been placed there in his absence.

The telegram was from Melrose, from Mrs. Shannon. It said only that she would arrive in Peterboro on a train reaching there at nine o'clock. It was now within twenty minutes of that time.

Why his mother should be coming to Peterboro, a journey not hitherto under contemplation so far as Hardy knew, he could not guess. He emerged from the torpor of his preoccupation sufficiently as he rattled over the pavements to the station to glance at the letters hastily thrust into his pocket. Among them was one from his mother from Melrose, while one from Amy and another addressed in Park's handwriting bore the New York postmark. Park's letter he tore open. It was brief.

"I am sending you, just as I sail for Bremen, an advance copy of an original brochure I am leaving with the publishers to put on the market. It can do you no harm, I am sure, you being safe within the true fold, as I understand it. I am doing Gregg highest honour, and, incidentally, doing my best to push him over into the deep water where he belongs. No use clinging to the shallows. When I saw Gregg I found it as I surmised. Perhaps hardly knowing it, he tries to hold on to his place in the old order, while he leads the rest of us on to its complete overthrow. Time's up for that sort of thing.

"You get honourable mention, you see!

"*Auf Wiedersehen.*

"PARK."

"P. S. Don't take Amy's change of heart too hard. There are others. This you have probably discovered by this time."

Having read this Hardy hastily opened Amy's letter, the station even then in sight. He read:

"DEAR OLD HARDY:

"I love you but, as time goes on, I have discovered that it is after all as my big brother. Park is different. We have not grown up together as you and I have.

"I never dreamed that I should be married to him and go to Germany, but he needs me terribly. The poor fellow is so lonely now and I seem the only one who can make him happy. We are planning in every way not to distress Mamma. You will both forgive us and believe we have tried to act for the best.

"AMY."

Five minutes later Hardy and his mother met on the station platform.

The sight of her face, serene, unravaged by suspense or consternation, instantly infused a sense of release into the tumult of Hardy's mind. She knew, perhaps, all that he knew and much more but she flew no danger signals. Her smile was still radiant, her handclasp, her kiss, as ever, refreshing to soul and sense.

Together in a quiet corner they sat down while Mrs. Shannon answered her son's urgent questions. The letter from herself, still unopened, should have reached him early in the morning. It would have prepared him for her coming to Peterboro for a week, and for the situation which had led to it.

Park, it appeared, had engaged passage on a ship sailing at noon on Wednesday, the previous day. He had left Melrose and taken final leave of his mother on Monday. At this time he had first made known to her the fact of the rupture of his "union" with Agatha Lechler, and the pitiful case of his little daughter. This came as an equally startling surprise to Hardy now.

On Tuesday morning Amy had decided, suddenly, as Mrs. Shannon supposed, to go in to New York to see a dentist regarding a tooth which had troubled her during the preceding night. She had appeared nervous and flurried in her preparations, especially so in her parting. Mrs. Shannon, however, thought nothing of this as Amy was excitable and invariably was keyed to a state of nervous dread when obliged to visit a dentist. She had spoken rather unconvincingly of returning at four in the afternoon, but this was taken with mental reservations since, when she went to the city, Amy was frequently beguiled into lengthening her stay by some unexpected encounter with old schoolmates.

At five o'clock, when Mrs. Shannon was beginning seriously to look for Amy to appear, she was called to the telephone to receive a telegram. It had been signed and sent by Park and Amy together. It informed her that they had been married at noon by an Episcopal clergyman and would sail together in twenty-four hours. The message also informed her that they both loved her and desired supremely her peace of mind; for which reason, and to avoid un-

pleasant discussion, they had carried out their plans privately. They had written Hardy.

Mrs. Shannon's practical maternal instinct expressed itself first of all in the impulse to collect such things as seemed most necessary from Amy's wardrobe and send them by messenger to the steamer. The girl had taken only a shopping bag with her. A glance through drawers and clothes presses, however, showed her that they were dismantled. She recalled then that when Park left on Monday he seemed to have a surprising quantity of luggage for a man, and that a new trunk, marked with his initials, was in evidence. All was clear to her now, except her own complete lack of perception of the intrigue which must have been going on almost before her eyes.

Mrs. Shannon had no inclination to dwell upon the painful shock she had received, nor upon the bitterness of her disappointment in this débâcle, with all of deceit and treachery which went with it. She told Hardy that she had closed the house, admitting that she found it wise, in order to preserve her balance, not to remain alone at Melrose where she must meet, with more or less wearisome evasion, the questions and curiosity of servants, pensioners and neighbours.

"And so, Hardy, I decided that, you still being left me," and Mrs. Shannon's voice flickered a little with the words, "I had the right to flee to you for refuge. You see, I expected you to know the whole story this morning."

"A shame that I wasn't on hand to get your letter, Mother dear," Hardy replied, something akin to wor-

ship in the allegiance in his eyes as they met hers,— "because then I should have had the best quarters I could find engaged and ready for you. But that isn't really a thing to mind. I will call up the proper hotel this minute and do the best we can for you. We will take a cab then and go over there and I will see that you are comfortably settled."

It was not until this program had been carried out, and the moment for his leaving her had come, that Hardy told Mrs. Shannon that he must himself leave Peterboro at once, taking the midnight train to New York. His absence, he assured her, would be very brief, perhaps but twenty-four hours, possibly two days. He should put pleasant friends on her trail, friends who would not let her be lonely. Meanwhile, she must take the time to get thoroughly fit and rested so that, upon his return, they could have good times together. He left, a sense weighing like lead upon his heart that the household on Locust Street, which had been so like a home, on this very day had been closed to him and his. But perhaps it would not be closed for long. . . . He would do what he could when he got to New York. . . . As he went on through the roaring darkness of an all-night railroad journey, Hardy found himself benumbed mentally by the swift and stunning succession of blows which had fallen upon him. The saddest sense and the most acute of which he was conscious was of poor little Amy, at that very moment on shipboard plunging through the night at sea, bound for a country in which she could never find herself at home and bound to a man who could

never bring happiness to one who loved him or who depended upon his love. Never, at such a price as this, would he have asked his own freedom!

Mrs. Shannon was too wise to ask Hardy concerning this necessity for a sudden journey to New York. Something in his look forbade questioning, but when she was alone and called to mind the white and stricken face with which he met her, she was forced to the conclusion that Amy's flight and Park's betrayal had wounded him more deeply than she had supposed, despite the fact of his engagement, it could have power to do.

XXIII

AN INTERLUDE

DOUGLAS GREGG, like most strong men, had his weak points.

In spite of his apparent independence he was supersensitive as regarded his reputation as a Christian minister, teacher and leader, blameless in all things. Perhaps unconsciously, yet quite definitely, he cherished a certain image of himself as he wished to be regarded among his fellow-men, not only in his own generation but in those succeeding, for he was not unaware of his own eminence. This idea gained upon him as the years passed and as, with declining strength, he realized that few years remained. As often happens, the nearer view of death emphasized the sense of personal responsibility. He was not infrequently occupied now with desire for reassurance regarding his influence, in particular his influence upon his students. There were even moments when he was beset with new and sudden fear lest, in his passionate quest for "truth," he had led any of them into devious ways. More and more his own spirit reverted to the early simplicities of his faith, and he had moments of profound anxiety lest his sense of himself might not match with others' sense of him.

A disturbing factor had been injected into his reflections by sober second thought upon the tribute of

praise of Germany's attainment which he had given in his classroom in the spring of 1917. As time passed the patriot in Gregg had risen above his personal prepossessions. He was forced to admit both the deterioration of Germany and her war-guilt. So much the more he suffered in silence from the consciousness that, by that ill-considered action, he had placed himself publicly in a false light.

As concerned his radical views of the Bible, involving invalidation of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian system, Gregg had found no difficulty himself in holding these without relinquishing the practices of piety in which he had grown up. This was due to the fiery force of his intellectual habit as also to his instinct of keeping the Bible scientifically considered, and the Bible devotionally considered, in "water-tight compartments." The term "Rationalism," as describing his religious position, remained obnoxious to him in the extreme, regarding himself, as he did, as a consistently religious man and a faithful Protestant church member.

Did he not conduct family worship with regularity? Did he not, as deacon, serve the Lord's table devoutly at the Communion of the Lord's Supper? Did he not support the church, as also Foreign and Domestic Missions, sacrificially, and not only with purse but with tongue and pen? Going farther, did he not maintain the personal exercises of prayer and meditation, of devotional Bible reading also, even though the Bible for him in a measure had lost its power? These things, if unconsciously, he counted to himself for righteous-

ness, as he expected them to be counted by all who knew him.

Upon this then habitual unease of Gregg's mind several months earlier there had fallen the shock of the tidings brought him by Narayan Bose concerning Dalrymple, whom he supposed to be "carrying on" as a successful foreign missionary. This defection of his favourite student, by reason of his lack of a distinct and positive Christian message to the heathen people, shook the foundations of Gregg's self-confidence, and rendered morbidly acute his awakened sense of responsibility and instinct of self-defence.

By night and day the thought of Dalrymple operated upon his spirit like a corroding acid. Into the ferment thus produced Park Shannon's essay was now cast to do its work.

The pronouncement that he, Douglas Gregg, was to be classed, labelled, handed down to posterity, not only as Liberal, Progressive and pro-German, but as the Pioneer and Protagonist of German Rationalism, of Materialism even, laid him low in the dust. Poor compensation was to be found in the fact that his name was coupled with the great names of Semler and Wellhausen.

And beneath this unheaval lay, at the very center of Douglas Gregg's anguish, the thought that Hardy Shannon, the youth in whom he had delighted, whom he had admitted to the inner shrine of his hearth and home, had conspired with his brother to effect the unsanctioned eulogy which conveyed his merciless indictment.

"If it had been an enemy that had reproached me," was often in these days the cry of the old Professor's soul, "then I could have borne it!"

It was not difficult to tear the miserable sketch to tatters, to expose the insolent recklessness of the writer, his overstatements, his crude inferences and malicious distortion of facts, the palpably Germanic propaganda which the work really was. The difficulty lay in the fact that it was beneath Gregg's dignity to notice it, that question and controversy could only serve to broadcast its insolent deductions. And these moreover were those lies of all lies most dangerous, being half truths.

From such a cup of trembling was Douglas Gregg drinking when, on the Monday morning following his mother's arrival in Peterboro, Hardy Shannon came to him at the close of a lecture.

"Can I have a moment with you, Professor Gregg?" Hardy asked respectfully, even humbly, and yet Gregg could discern no reflection of his own mental agony on the clear young brow.

"You have perhaps an explanation to make,—at last? You have not been in haste," he added. Voice and manner were alike bitter cold.

"I am afraid, sir, that I cannot explain this thing my brother has done, because I am completely in the dark about it. How it distresses me I am sure you must understand."

"You cannot say, however, that you did not have part in that extraordinary piece of work, can you? It would hardly be worth while to do so indeed.

Your brother explicitly expresses his obligation to you for your valuable assistance."

Gregg's sarcasm scorched Hardy's face like a flame. He felt his cheeks burn.

"It was not my intention. . . . I did not understand what use . . ."

"Precisely. That may very well be. Your suggestions, however, were in line with your brother's purposes?"

"No, sir, they were not."

A moment's silence. Then Gregg said:

"Pray explain, Mr. Shannon, if you can."

"I cannot explain, sir." With this Hardy's eyes were lifted to the Professor's face in an appeal whose very wordlessness smote Gregg keenly. All the more for that he hardened his heart against the youth who had been dear to him. He turned away.

"Very well. I see no occasion for prolonging this conversation," he said abruptly.

"But may I say one thing, Professor Gregg," Hardy urged. "I could not see you earlier. I had to go to New York to see what I could do . . . what could be done to stop this thing. . . . I did my best and I assure you, sir, that, as far as possible, that inexcusable thing has been suppressed."

Gregg lifted his eyebrows incredulously. Plainly he was not impressed, nor even interested.

"Such things are never suppressed, Mr. Shannon. What is writ is writ. What is published is published. It is a thing impossible to recall. Good-morning."

Hardy caught the chilly smile with which this was

said, a different thing from the smile of humorous gentleness with which he was familiar in Gregg. He perceived the finality of the break with himself, the deliberateness of the intention to make it so. His heart sank within him as he came away. To have had any part, even the very smallest, in working this havoc upon the master he had loved . . . to be unable to emphasize or explain to him (since to do so would be at Park's expense) that he, Hardy, had had no conscious part in the sinister performance, these were bitter drops to his taste. That the torture which had entered his soul had pierced him in body as well he suddenly realized as he met fellow-students in the Quadrangle. They stared at him and after him, puzzled and concerned.

"This will never do!" Hardy admonished himself. "I must get myself in hand, not lie down and die inwardly just yet." With which he made haste to the refuge of his own room.

He thought of his mother when he had rested a moment, when his breath and pulses had moderated, when he had time to realize that his relation to Douglas Gregg was not the only one he bore.

When he had returned late on Saturday night to Peterboro Hardy had found awaiting him here in his room in Palfrey Hall, a letter from his mother. He now reread this letter. It told him that "thanks to those charming girls," Nancy Chance and Mary Minot, who had devoted themselves to her, she had been beautifully established in a tiny suite of furnished rooms on a suburban street, not very far from the

Peyton School. She confessed to some anxiety, as well as curiosity, regarding his unexplained "business trip" to New York, but he could depend on her adhering to her custom of not asking questions.

She had taken the little apartment for only a week, but already she felt inclined to stay two. It was comfort beyond telling to be where she could see her son every day. Also she liked Peterboro. How could she help it since, now when she could scarcely help feeling a trifle lonely, and the home at Melrose was left empty, she had not only Hardy but these charming friends of his about her?

He must not try to see her until the Sunday morning, Mrs. Shannon wrote. Then she would be in his congregation and, for the first time, would hear him preach. Mary Minot was to take her there and sit with her. Did that girl strike Hardy as little lower than the angels? It could hardly be otherwise, such being, not fancy, but fact! But, after all, Mrs. Shannon confessed to being more "occupied" with Nancy. "What is it that gives the girl," she asked, "that mortally wounded look? My whole heart goes out to her. I know she needs mothering."

There was a quick uprising of satisfaction in Hardy's mind, even in the midst of present tumult, in calling up these impressions made upon his mother. Yes, she had estimated Mary correctly. And it was cheering to find one, whose judgment was so just, perceiving how much in Nancy was right, though some things were going wrong. Nancy's mood had softened perceptibly since Mary Minot had become her

companion. A real intimacy such as they had not had before had come about also between himself and these two girls as they had planned together for Dorothy Gregg's going away.

This thought brought Hardy back to the doorstep of 17 Locust Street, and the postman's step and voice behind him, five days earlier. Again the leaden weight fell upon his heart.

Later in the day, in an interval between lectures, Hardy tried to call his mother on the telephone but could get no answer. Concluding that she had merely gone out for luncheon he walked out in the early afternoon to Mrs. Shannon's new abode, leaving his telephone call with the Palfrey Hall janitor, as had become his custom. A caretaker let him in to her apartment, telling him that his mother had left a message on her desk for him.

As Hardy entered the small living-room he was impressed with the air which it had already taken on by reason of his mother's presence;—the small touches, gracious and charming, which belonged to her wherever she might go. A sudden sense of comfort, a relaxing of his load came over him as he threw himself into a deep easy chair and opened his mother's note.

"'What though the field be lost, all is not lost!'" he murmured to himself. One present, definite task, at least, was his, to keep his mother, now and always, from any suspicion of Park's outrageous performance. She had enough to bear.

Mrs. Shannon's note said that Nancy Chance had

taken her out to luncheon and to attend a lecture. They would return soon after four o'clock, bringing "cates" with them for high tea to which he was invited, if, as she supposed, he could drop in about that time. Mary Minot had promised to join them as soon as she could get away from school engagements.

All very good, thought Hardy, and yet how different it would have been, this meeting with Mary to-day, set free,—as he now at last and for the first time realized he might have been free,—to speak to her what was in his heart! But he could drag no one, least of all Mary Minot, into the muddy cross-currents which suddenly surrounded him. The more he speculated over these the more troubled the waters became. Was he himself, after all, quite clear of responsibility? This question would not down. What, if anything, was the actual extent of his own contribution to Park's *coup de grâce?* Just what was the aid for which his brother, with artful show of generosity, declared himself indebted? Hardy sat and thought steadily.

Undeniably he had observed and perhaps more than once expressed his thought of a similarity between Gregg and Semler. Gradually an idea came to him that while over-seas in service, he might have written to some one of this. Could it have been to Park? Obviously not, as he had had no correspondence with his brother in two years. Perhaps it was to his mother. . . . Hardy could not be sure. He had had a large number of correspondents. . . .

Cost what it might he must drag this thing out into

the light, must bear his share of blame. But where and how could he find the link between himself and Park in the affair? A vague remembrance began to shape in his mind. Such mention might have been made while he was in Coblenz; also it was quite possibly Conrad to whom he had so written. He was by no means sure of it, but Conrad was coming to Peterboro for this week-end.—He mustn't lose this chance of running the thing to earth.

An International Commission for Goodwill and Welfare had called Dr. Chance to its service. He had accepted the call and was about to leave Peterboro. Absorbed in preparation, he had sent for Conrad to supply his pulpit for the coming Sunday. This fact Hardy knew.

Turning to the small desk now appropriated to his mother's use, Hardy forthwith appropriated what he needed and wrote a hasty line to Conrad. Giving no reason for the request he asked him, if he chanced to have kept a letter written by himself from Coblenz a year or so ago, to bring it along when he came to Peterboro, as he heard he was coming, to preach at All Souls' Church for Dr. Chance. As he rose from the desk, the letter just sealed in his hand, a knock came at the outer door and the caretaker ushered in Mary Minot.

With something of almost punctilious courtesy Hardy invited her to wait, as he was waiting, for his mother's return. He seated her in a comfortable corner and proceeded in every-day fashion to call her attention to certain small features of the apartment.

"Hardy, *what is it?*"

Mary did not say this as if in exclamation. It was a serious, deliberate question, a question to which a straight reply was imperative.

For a moment they faced each other in complete silence, then Hardy asked huskily:

"How do you know that things are going wrong with me?"

"It is cut so deep in your face," Mary answered. "You look—I don't know how to say it!—exterminated!"

Hardy rose from his place and walked to the window. Could he tell the hateful story to Mary? Was it a weakness to which he must not yield,—the desire to share with her at this moment the burden of his spirit? or was it on the contrary his privilege? . . . his right? and hers?

Before Hardy could decide the crucial question there was another knock at the door. He crossed the room in silence and opened it. A voice half-way down the stairs called:

"If you please, sir! I take it this call would be for you, sir,—Mr. Hardy Shannon? They're waiting, whoever it is called."

"Perfectly right. I will come down," Hardy responded and excused himself to Mary.

After a few moments' absence, the clock then striking four, he reëntered the room. Throwing himself into the armchair beside the desk he exclaimed:

"It is decided now. I shall tell you what you have asked me to on the understanding that every word concerning this matter is spoken in confidence. I believe

it is fair and right for me to do this because I know that I can trust you, Mary Minot."

He broke off for a little, then added very soberly:

"This telephone call was from Dr. Loring, President of the Divinity School, you know. He asks me to meet 'very informally' himself and a few members of the factulty and board of trustees on Friday evening. It seems a most courteous invitation, but,—while it is not exactly an arraignment, Mary,—certainly it is not the kind of summons a man would choose to get."

"What does it mean?"

"It means that I am under suspicion of having part in a dastardly piece of business,—something injurious to Professor Gregg. It means that unless I can clear myself I am already discredited in the eyes of the faculty . . . shall be discredited generally before very long."

"You cannot be seriously under such a suspicion, Hardy Shannon," Mary said with irrepressible indignation. "Every one who knows you knows that you are —above suspicion."

"Thank you, dear friend." Hardy spoke with great gentleness. The pathos of which he was unconscious broke down the girl's composure.

"You must let me cry—just a minute. It will do me good," and she laughed a little.

"It does *me* good—a whole world of good, I can tell you that. Yes, I believe I need some one to cry over me, Mary. Go ahead! Ye that have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now."

This having brought them back by way of a laugh

to common composure, Hardy recounted to Mary the revolutionary events in his family life,—Amy Shannon's secret and hasty marriage, her sudden departure with Park for Germany and, thereafter, the appearance of the publication which had severed the friendly relation between himself and Douglas Gregg, since to all appearance he was guilty of having part in Park's performance.

The tale was told in quick, disjointed sentences. It was not a pleasant one to tell or to hear.

"And you cannot well defend yourself without deepening the depth of your brother's condemnation," Mary spoke quietly, after a little, as if mediating aloud.

"That is evident," was Hardy's reply. "But there is something else as evident, Mary, and I must make it plain. I have to confess that one result of Park's procedure was slow in penetrating my mind, it being rather overcharged with perplexing problems. But at last it did dawn upon me that, by reason of Park and Amy's clandestine marriage, I was myself set free from a bond which had held me for a long time, although it had never possessed the sacredness of a real love."

"You *were* engaged then to Amy Shannon? Nancy thought so."

"Yes. A boy and girl affair. It never went very deep as you can see by the way it has ended. But it has had sufficient claim upon me to forbid my ever telling you that I had found what love really is—such a love as I have for you."

Mary Minot's eyes were not cast down, nor did she

show the maidenly modesty which shrinks and blushes before such avowal. She faced her lover with a radiant light in her face,—a light which had in it the solemnity of religious exaltation. She stretched both hands to him and he clasped them, his head bent as if in worship.

"But you see it is only trouble for us, Mary," Hardy said a moment later. "This wretched offense of Park's in which I am supposed to be implicated, makes it impossible for me,—it would for any decent man,—to ask you to become my wife. I have just told you that I am in all probability discredited, under a hateful suspicion. . . ."

"Very well, Hardy, dear," interrupted Mary imperiously. "Perhaps it does. Men, I suppose, must have certain scruples. I dare say you are right. But all this doesn't, you see, make it in the least impossible for me to give you my promise, . . . *without* your asking. Which I do!"

The sound of steps was heard on the stairs.

"Keep your distance, Mr. Shannon!" admonished Mary. "Eyes front! But, oh, how glad I am that you have been summoned to speak for yourself!"

XXIV

UNAPPEASED

"MR. SHANNON, it is very good of you to be willing to meet us here to-night. I want you to know that we all appreciate your presence as a personal favour."

With these words the President of Peterboro Divinity School, standing with outstretched hand in his sumptuous library, received Hardy Shannon on the Friday night following. The young man, whatever of doubt and dread he might have lived through in the intervening days, had himself now well in hand, as the men seated around the broad library table perceived.

It was a small group, not, as Hardy had half expected, a marshalling of the whole faculty and the board of trustees of the institution. The latter was represented only by Judge Sawyer, its chairman; of the faculty, beside Dr. Loring and Douglas Gregg, only two were present,—the head of the Department of Homiletics, Professor Kingsley, suspected of orthodoxy, and Justus Cameron, head of the Old Testament Department, an ultra-Liberal.

Dr. Loring was a man of the world in the best sense, a Christian gentleman and scholar, a thinker as well as an administrator, conspicuous for his gracious manner and his irenic instinct. Between the extremes of theological position maintained on his faculty he held

the balance, wisely and well, being described as a "progressive conservative." It was due to Loring's *via media* that Peterboro in some of the later years of its history, had not been condemned either as a center of radicalism or as retrograde and reactionary, hence out of date and out of favour.

Hardy, having taken the armchair offered him at Dr. Loring's left, found Judge Sawyer his vis-à-vis. Gregg was near the foot of the table.

The first thing to attract Hardy's attention was a copy of the thin dark green book, with its gilt title, *Two Modernist Epoch-Makers,* and his brother's name. Dr. Loring held it in his hand and laid it on the table before him.

"Gentlemen, I have asked you to come here to-night because of this inoffensive looking book, very recently published by the Ryno-Isenberg firm of New York, and written by Mr. Park Shannon, a brother of our friend at my left," and the President bowed with a smile friendly, although grave, to Hardy. "This book is now upon the market and soon, if it is not already, will be in the hands of all and sundry. As it may nearly affect the influence and position of our honoured colleague,—our most honoured, I might say,—Professor Douglas Gregg, and as the book, while ostensibly flattering to him, is not merely mischievous in general but disquieting to us here in particular in its insinuations, I have asked Mr. Hardy Shannon to help us by meeting with this small group of friends of the Seminary. We hope, Mr. Shannon, that the outcome of this very informal conference will be the shedding of

some light upon what is undeniably an obscure and painful situation."

Hardy bowed. Clearly he was under arraignment, gently as it was enunciated. Dr. Loring then called upon Professor Gregg to give his own impressions of the Shannon monograph freely, without hesitation.

Not until Hardy lifted unwilling eyes to Douglas Gregg standing tall and gaunt in his place, had he divined fully the shattering effect of the blow which had fallen upon him. The old scholar held himself erect and, as he began speaking his voice, while low, was firm and resonant; none the less he was suddenly, indefinably changed into an aged and broken man. Scarcely could the young man who loved him repress a groan.

"I am ignorant," Gregg began, "as to the number of copies of this sketch now in circulation." As he spoke he laid a second copy on the table. "I knew before I came that President Loring had received one, as I did, mailed by the author himself on the day of his departure for Germany. It seems essentially appropriate that he should abscond directly he had shot his bolt; it is wholly in keeping with the character of his production. I take it for granted that the book has been examined, superficially at least, by those here present." Assent was indicated.

"Perhaps Mr. Hardy Shannon," continued the Professor, "may be able to enlighten us as to the size of the edition, in order that we may be aware of the probable extent of its circulation."

Gregg paused, his eyes fixed upon Hardy.

"A thousand copies, Professor Gregg, were printed, but ——" here Hardy was interrupted.

"Very good. That is all I ask of you, sir," said Gregg. "It is about what I supposed. This book, gentlemen, is made up, as I am sure you will admit, of gross exaggeration and misrepresentation. At the same time, as it presents historical facts accurately, as it is dedicated to me without my permission and as it artfully purports to be in the nature of panegyric upon myself, it will be accepted as authentic, even as authorized, by those who know me far and near, and will be read as such by them.

"In so far as concerns the participation in this assault upon my character and standing as Christian minister and teacher by Mr. Hardy Shannon, in strict justice I must state that, not long after he entered the Seminary, he declared plainly in conversation with me his opposition to the trend of modern thought. In fact he freely confessed that he was preparing himself to *fight* what is commonly known as Religious Liberalism. This may serve in some measure to explain Mr. Hardy Shannon's collaboration in the making of this" —here Gregg pointed with an incisive finger to the brochure which lay before him. "I confess, however," he added, "that I had thought only of fighting in the open myself, as we discussed our contrasted views and agreed to differ. I accepted this as a Gentlemen's Agreement."

For a moment Hardy's blood throbbed fiercely in his veins and flew to his temples. Then, slowly there came an ominous change to the deadly pallor which in him

signified strong anger. His eyes fastened full upon Gregg's face; he bent his head as if in recognition of his last words with unconscious hauteur.

"I have, at this moment, one thing further, only, to say." Gregg turned now as he spoke and addressed Judge Sawyer. "I can see no course open to me but to present through you to the trustees of our School, my resignation as a teacher on the faculty."

With this Gregg, producing a note from his inner coat pocket, resumed his seat. The note was passed on to Judge Sawyer. The latter rose instantly upon receiving it.

"Professor Gregg," he declared, a ring of indignation in his voice, "on the part of the trustees I decline to consider this communication. Our School and all who sustain its interests would protest unconditionally against such action on your part."

Having spoken, the Judge walked around the table and gave the note of resignation back into its writer's keeping with a touch of impressiveness.

"Consider my advancing years, Judge," said Gregg, looking up into the other's face, almost pleadingly. "I have grown older fast of late."

"You are all right, sir," and Judge Sawyer laid a hand affectionately on the other's shoulder. "You are our seer, our prophet. Seers never grow old," with which he returned to his place. Gregg shook his head sorrowfully.

"I am not a seer," he murmured. "Seers see into the 'deeps of personality,'—see that which was hidden . . . from me."

At this point Dr. Loring called upon Judge Sawyer, who "by this action had so justly expressed the mind of the company," to speak as representing the trustees of the Seminary on the subject before them. On his feet in an instant the Judge, who was of temperament both genial and autocratic, put a question, pointed and sharp-set.

"Is it in order to ask a few questions of the young gentleman on your left, Mr. President, the brother, I believe you said, of the creator of this contemptible travesty?"

Dr. Loring assented.

Hardy rose, as Judge Sawyer turned to address him, something like the joy of battle tingling in his veins as he faced the Judge, in spite of the seriousness of the moment for himself.

"May I ask you, Mr. Shannon," began Sawyer coldly, "when you first became acquainted with the purpose of your brother to produce this sketch?"

"Last Thursday, Judge Sawyer." Hardy's reply was as laconic as the question.

"Do you mean to tell me, sir, that you had no previous knowledge that such an interesting enterprise was under way?"

"None whatever."

"How could that happen, Mr. Shannon? You have been in this country for several months, I believe. Your brother, also. When did he sail for Europe?"

"Last Wednesday. I have not been in intimate touch with my brother since his return from Germany last March, or for a considerable time before that."

"And yet you have contributed, as I notice in this 'Foreword,'" and the Judge tapped the book before him sharply, "you have contributed valuable assistance to the author, as he is at pains to acknowledge."

Hardy was silent.

"I will put the question directly," Judge Sawyer declared. "Did you or did you not assist in the working out of this book?"

"I did not assist in it in any way whatever—wittingly."

The Judge raised his eyebrows and looked Hardy steadily in the face, a smile of incredulous irony upon his own. What he read in the young man's look,—grave, collected, unflinching,—produced a perceptible change in his own attitude. Perhaps, until that moment, Judge Sawyer had observed only a good-looking young fellow, properly dressed and turned out, who had the misfortune of being related to an unspeakable cad, related presumably not only to him, but to all his works. Now he discerned something more,—the ascendancy of truth in the inner man.

"Not *wittingly,*" he repeated in a reflective tone. "Puzzling to be sure, that, but we will let it pass for the present. There will be a chance to take it up later. I will ask another question, which I hope you will consent to answer explicitly. What, in your view, Mr. Shannon, is the animus of this book? After all you have the privilege of knowing the author better than the rest of us can. Please be good enough to give us his point of view in doing the thing, as you see it. I believe you will admit that the interests at stake are

sufficiently serious to *command* candour on your part, even if it may not be easy to command it."

It was not easy. No one looking at Hardy could mistake his conflict of feeling, but he could not longer deny the justice of the claim made upon him. He spoke slowly, even reluctantly, but with firmness.

"I think, sir, that my brother undertook to write this book from a mixture of motives. We are unlike mentally and temperamentally and for that reason I may not be qualified to judge these motives. But this is what I see in the thing:

"Park was intimate while in New York with a group of foreign-born writers of the school which attempts to tear down our American traditions, whether religious, social or intellectual. I imagine that he was seized with an impulse, while over here and in that particular atmosphere, to score with these people by himself publishing something audacious, startling. Like the rest of them he was out to make a sensation."

"He has made it!" murmured Dr. Loring.

"It is possible," continued Hardy, "that a touch of resentment too unconsciously entered into the working out of the thing."

"Resentment,—how is that?" questioned the Judge.

"I scarcely know how to express it," said Hardy, frowning, "but I think Park fancied that . . . at that time he *might* have, you see . . . that my relations with Professor Gregg had been more intimate, more friendly than his own had been when he was here in the Seminary."

"He saw a chance to score off both of you incidentally? Is that it?" asked the Judge.

"I do not think he would object to doing so. But that motive, if it did have some small part in his purposes, hardly, I am sure, would have been recognized by himself. There were, as I make it out, two major objects in his mind. A line which my brother sent me from the ship when he sailed a week ago makes it obvious that he deliberately—by associating him in the way he did with Semler,—attempted to force Professor Gregg over into the avowedly radical and rationalistic camp. Such a result, even approximately gained, would have been accounted, I believe, success for his project, by himself and by others."

This statement startled the group around the table perceptibly. Here seemed, at last, a clue to the maze.

"Park is not stupid." Hardy was now completely master of the situation. Subconsciously he was aware of it. "He knew that he was maligning Professor Gregg as a Christian. At the same time he sought to exalt him as a radical leader, and, above all, as one who had derived his scholarship and his methods from Germany. Just here, Judge Sawyer, I am convinced, myself, was the heart of Park Shannon's contention."

"Do you mean that your brother is distinctly pro-German?"

"I mean that he is, not pro-German, sir, but *German,*" answered Hardy. "Nine years spent in Prussia have made him more Prussian than the Prussians, to our sorrow. I am satisfied that in this defiant

onslaught my brother expressed his humiliation at Germany's political overthrow. This sense of mortification was almost an obsession with him. With this was interwoven an almost fierce desire to exalt Teutonism, with all that belongs to it. He hoped by this means to do something to exalt it as, after all, intellectually and spiritually triumphant despite its political defeat, here among us in this country."

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Judge Sawyer. "I have only glanced the thing over myself. What do you think, Dr. Loring? Have you distinguished these purposes?"

"I have not analyzed them as clearly as Mr. Hardy Shannon has just done," replied the President, "but I recognize the discriminating nature of his deductions."

"You think then, Mr. Shannon," the Judge asked, "that your brother's major premise was to display Deutschland defeated but still *über alles?* that, to this end, he was willing to drag the man of most distinction whom he could by any means capture in triumph at his chariot wheels?"

Hardy bowed grave assent, and sat down, for at this moment a servant entered who spoke to Dr. Loring. He rose and, with a word of excuse, left the room. Presently returning he announced the fact that the Reverend Barton Conrad, an alumnus of the Divinity School and a friend of Mr. Hardy Shannon, had come with a letter for that gentleman which might be in point in the evening's discussion. Dr. Loring would himself suggest the appropriateness of inviting Mr. Conrad to join them for the remainder of the evening.

This request being granted, Conrad having been counted the leading man in his class and a general favourite, the newcomer appeared at once. Cordially greeted by the men present, who were all his friends, he seated himself beside Hardy. The two grasped hands with unconcealed warmth. Conrad, having placed a time-worn letter with marks of foreign origin on the table before him, sat silently observant of the scene. He discerned, as he fancied, a sense of cordiality towards his friend in the group with the exception of Douglas Gregg. His expression, to Conrad, much puzzled, seemed that of one unappeased. What was forward remained thus far dimly guessed by him. But it was impossible to miss the effect of high tension.

Again Judge Sawyer took the initiative.

"I have one question still to ask, or rather to repeat, Mr. Shannon." Whereupon Hardy again rose to his feet. "Thereafter it is my purpose to hand over the office of examiner to our host, Dr. Loring. . . . I have glanced again at the Foreword of the book under discussion, and I find that I am not mistaken; especial obligation is expressed to 'Captain Hardy Shannon, A. E. F. —— Division, for the contribution of the ancient and almost forgotten work on Semler by Henke, discovered by him in Cologne, as also for helpful suggestions regarding the parallelism between Semler and Douglas Gregg.' Now I must ask you, Mr. Shannon, to answer definitely;—did you find in Cologne and send to your brother this ancient and unknown book of which mention is here made?"

"I purchased the Life of Semler mentioned in

Cologne and sent it home in a bundle of war souvenirs."

"You sent it home! Did you not send it to your brother, or commend it in particular to his attention?"

"No, sir. I had no idea at the time I sent the package from Coblenz that my brother Park was in the United States. I did not think of him in connection with the book. He undoubtedly found it lying around the house somewhere."

"And he was duly, or perhaps unduly, grateful! Very good, Mr. Shannon. Now to carry this question of your contribution to a conclusion. What about your 'helpful suggestions regarding the parallelism between Semler and Douglas Gregg'?"

"It is there that I am at a loss," replied Hardy. "I know that I have spoken, perhaps more than once, of noting a parallelism between these two great scholars. But it could not have been to Park. I cannot recall certainly, but think it possible that I may have written of this in a letter to my friend Conrad." Turning he asked:

"How about it, Conrad? I see you have brought that Coblenz letter of mine of which I wrote you. It is the only one I sent you after the Semler book came into my possession. Is there any such suggestion in it?"

Conrad signified that this was the case.

"Do you consent to allow your friend to read the passage in question?" Judge Sawyer asked, eying Hardy keenly.

"Assuredly," was Hardy's answer.

Rising, and most unwillingly, Conrad read aloud from Hardy's letter dated December 18, 1918, the following sentences:

"The odd thing about the book as I read it is that I am constantly reminded of Professor Gregg. There is the same paradox,—the private, personal piety running parallel with his occupation of assailing the integrity of the Bible, of inspiration, of the Christian Faith." . . .

"That is all," Conrad added, and sat down.

"Is that the parallelism to which your brother alludes?" Judge Sawyer questioned Hardy.

"It must be, because I am confident that I have never alluded since then to the subject. But how this letter to Conrad could have contributed to . . ."

Conrad interrupted.

"I beg your pardon!" he exclaimed. "Dr. Loring, can I speak a word on my own account?"

"Certainly, Mr. Conrad."

"I do not understand the situation or the subject under discussion here to-night. I reached town an hour ago and expected to find Hardy Shannon at the Seminary. Failing in this I called upon Miss Minot, a friend of my friend. She told me where he was, and that she believed he was disappointed in not seeing me before he came here, having expected to receive a letter of some importance which I was to bring at his request. I took the liberty of following him and you have been good enough to give me a place in your counsel. Please pardon this long explanation. It seemed called for. Now I can speak intelligently here

on just one point, which is simply this;—about a month ago I met Mr. Park Shannon accidentally on a train. He was reading at the moment this Life of Semler which his brother had sent home from Germany. We discussed the book a little and, knowing no reason for privacy in the matter, I repeated to him the substance of what has just been read."

"It was grist to his mill all right," exclaimed Judge Sawyer. "I have no further question to ask, Dr. Loring."

Whether he had cleared the situation or brought "rout upon rout, confusion worse confounded," Conrad could not decide as he glanced around the table. He feared the latter when he looked at Douglas Gregg. Never had he chanced to see aspect so irreconcilable. Plainly the characterization of Hardy's letter had pierced him as token of injustice scarcely less flagrant than that of his brother. For, while Hardy's parallel fell far short of the comparison drawn by Park with all which that connoted, it yet displayed the man, Douglas Gregg, in a markedly different light from that in which he regarded himself, or supposed himself to be regarded by others. Hardy, on the contrary, Conrad noted, now looked singularly relieved. He knew at least that his most heinous offence had been made manifest.

"Mr. Shannon, as far as I can judge," Dr. Loring now put the question, "you are not altogether in sympathy,—in your views, I mean,—either with your brother or with Professor Gregg. Would you be good enough to give us briefly your own theological position?

I think it would be useful and fair to all concerned at just this point."

Again Hardy stood at attention. All eyes were upon him and none failed to perceive the repose now visible in his face.

"I came to Peterboro, Dr. Loring, to fit myself for the Christian ministry, but also with the definite purpose of studying into the work, methods, and results of what is called Religious Liberalism. This in particular as represented by Professor Gregg, for whose character and learning I had, and must always have, the highest respect. This purpose, I can only say frankly now, as I said to Professor Gregg himself at the outset, was not because I was convinced that the Radical Critics are leading the Christian Church in the right direction, but because I was convinced, whether mistaken or not, that unconsciously to themselves they are leading it astray.

"Professor Gregg has confirmed me in saying that I confessed this position of mine, with frankness. I remember distinctly the conversation in question. It must have taken place just about two years ago although it seems ten. I remember declaring with the confidence of my inexperience that it was my purpose to *fight* the new Religious Liberalism. Since then I have found out what fighting . . . what war in any realm of human activity *means*." Hardy steadied his voice with difficulty, profound sadness in his face. "I am not inclined now," he went on, "as I was two years ago, to go in for spiritual bloodshed. We have seen enough of that—have seen it just now, even just here. I have surrendered any design of fighting in

this field. . . . Such purposes seem to me as hopeless as they are tragic."

As he stopped speaking Professor Cameron, glancing at him sharply, commented:

"We may take it then, that you yield to the spirit of the age and accept its onward march with as good grace as you may?"

"No, sir." Hardy responded promptly, sudden sternness manifest in look and voice. "That is far from my position. I purpose *not* to yield but to *resist* with all my strength. I purpose to defend the old Faith with every drop of blood in me. But I shall not fight. I have no trust, no hope, save in Christ, *crucified and lifted up*. He is Way, Truth, Life."

Turning then to Dr. Loring, Hardy continued: "Sir, you have been so kind as to grant me opportunity to witness to my faith, else I could hardly dare to speak in this presence. I believe in a divinely inspired Bible, not simply a collection of inspiring historical records. If the New Testament does not give us Divine Truth, then the Church's foundation is falsehood. But I believe it is the right of the Church to claim that it is rooted and grounded in truth, *not in a lie*. If I did not believe this I should certainly not enter the Christian ministry.

"I believe that God sent His Son to redeem us from sin and from its power, that Jesus was God incarnate, born of a Virgin. I believe that the Cross was not an accident or a sentimental appeal, but was the climax of a plan of redemption for our race, its foundations laid when sin entered the world. I believe in the

Resurrection as given in the Gospels, with no desire to explain it away as legend or as 'subjective hallucination.' 'If God is possible, miracle is possible.' The supernatural is not against but above reason. To my mind denial of the supernatural, tap-root of Destructive Criticism, is its fatal flaw. The determination to explain away whatever transcends the familiar order of nature becomes in the end, if I am right, Materialism, the determination to explain away Religion itself. The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned."

Hardy had spoken with great quietness, humbly, almost diffidently, but, as he sat down, Judge Sawyer, turning to Professor Kingsley who sat beside him, said in an undertone, but with something approaching solemnity:

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!"

Kingsley responded only by an exclamation; Cameron, however, addressed himself to Hardy, remarking:

"I judge, sir, that you are a literalist. If that is your position you could have spared yourself this elaboration of details. The literalist position is sufficiently well known."

"Perhaps that term best describes men of my way of thinking, Professor Cameron," returned Hardy thoughtfully. "I am not quite sure. Those of us, however, who hold the position which I have imperfectly described, do not accept certain literalistic principles. We believe the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God. At the same time the various writers, being human, write, in some degree, each ac-

cording to his human characteristics. The method is of man, the inspiration of God. The search into these human methods and characteristics seems to us an exalted duty and privilege,—but not the highest. This we should miss if we failed to receive and discern the Holy Spirit itself, which, dwelling within the Word, is breathed into our souls if we will receive it."

President Loring rose and stood for a moment in silence. When he spoke it was with unwonted seriousness.

"I believe that we have gained what we did not look for, perhaps, in coming here to-night;—a distinct spiritual stimulation. I can at least say for myself that such is the case. Now, we must return for one last moment to the business which called us together. I believe furthermore that we shall agree that Mr. Hardy Shannon is exonerated from responsibility in his brother's unfortunate production, since every man has a right to the private expression of an honest opinion, however mistaken. Professor Gregg, do you agree to this?"

Douglas Gregg bent his head in assent, without lifting his eyes. "I am glad," he said simply, "that Mr. Shannon is acquitted of direct, purposed participation in his brother's production."

"Then there remains one question more," continued Professor Loring. "Is there any practicable method by which the circulation of this book can be checked? A thousand copies have been printed. Mr. Shannon, can you tell us how many are now in circulation?"

"Yes, sir, three. Two are now on the table. One is

on the high seas in Park Shannon's possession. I also received one, but to make perfectly sure that no eyes but mine should ever rest upon it, I have burned it."

"A capital idea!" exclaimed Judge Sawyer rising. "Dr. Loring, will you follow suit? A fire, I perceive, is still burning in the grate. But it seems to need fresh fuel." As he spoke he extended his hand towards the book lying before the President.

"By all means," said the latter composedly. "I can think of no better use to put it to. How about your copy, Gregg?" he asked as the Judge tossed the thin green book on the embers.

Gregg shook his head.

"I believe not," he said smiling slightly. "It may serve me now and again as a hair shirt."

Glad to relax, the company took this remark almost mirthfully, but Dr. Loring again called them to order.

"What about the nine hundred and ninety-nine other copies, gentlemen? We have solved nothing, you perceive. How does it happen that only four are in circulation? How can such a thing be proved?"

Again Hardy rose.

"On Thursday night, as soon as possible after the book reached me," he said, "I went to New York. On Friday I lost no time in calling upon Messrs. Ryno and Isenberg. At the outset, in answer to my request for a copy as a possible purchaser, they told me that, unhappily, only four advance copies had been bound up, these being put through to satisfy the author's extreme urgency and for his personal use. The edition as a whole still remained unbound. I then opened

negotiations for securing the edition. The publishers were not invulnerable to certain considerations, especially when I assured them that the book would inevitably, if placed on the market, give them no end of trouble and disfavour. They were willing to sell. That is all," and Hardy sat down.

Naturally it was matter of interest to nobody there present that this " consideration " had cost the speaker the last dollar of the small legacy left him by his father.

A general murmur arose.

" You must give us a little more information, Mr. Shannon," urged the President.

" Well, it was a rather simple matter," rejoined Hardy. " The unbound books, numbering 996, when purchased, were conveyed to a kind of Gehenna in the outskirts of the city and burned before my eyes. I was able also to secure a signed agreement from the publishers to the effect that no further copies would be issued."

The company broke up in a small tumult of praise and congratulation on Hardy's bold and effective action. Douglas Gregg thanked him, formally, however. Judge Sawyer taking him by the shoulders said:

" Well, my boy, you have witnessed a good confession here to-night. Not before Pontius Pilate, but before men who gathered here pretty generally expecting to send you out sternly censured under a cloud."

XXV

OUT OF THE RUNNING

PROFESSOR GREGG'S afternoon class in Judaism and Christianity for the Middle Year men of Peterboro Seminary was breaking up. Although the hour was early the November light already had begun to fade indoors.

Hardy Shannon, rising from his place, lingered a little. Quite unconsciously to himself there was a plait of perplexity, anxiety even, between his brows. It was often there in these days. Still, at the moment he was unaware of anxiety, being filled with an almost impassioned intellectual enjoyment, and the wish to inquire further concerning the theme under consideration. Douglas Gregg had been at his best in the hour just past, a fact which signified the exercise of close and serious thinking.

Slowly the young man followed the file moving towards the door. Gregg had left his low rostrum now and was advancing more slowly even in the same direction. The "joy of elevated thought" softened the austerity of his face; its aspect was benign. Swift and sudden the impulse fell upon Hardy to seize this moment to break through the barrier which had risen between them on the day when Park Shannon's parting shot had hit home. Never since then had the Professor's bearing of aloofness towards himself shown

relenting. Plainly his own expressed estimate of Gregg's work and the contradiction between it and the Professor's personal practices and conduct of life, had cut him off from his master's sympathy and interest irretrievably.

But could it, after all, be final? Gregg must be accustomed to sharper shots than that. What if he were only waiting for him, Hardy, to make the natural, cordial approach of other days? How could they, who had found much to enjoy in each other's companionship, much of inner sympathy, be wholly and lastingly separated? *Could* they, in reality, when in his own heart rose this irresistible urge towards return?

Scarcely knowing that he did so, Hardy modified his steps in such fashion as to bring him face to face with the Professor at the classroom door, last of all to leave. There was a quickening then of his heart-beat, a wavering smile on his lips. The plait between his brows knit closer. Sharp solicitude showed in the appeal with which his eyes met Gregg's and, not realizing the ineptitude of the motion, he mechanically extended his hand.

"Do you think, Professor Gregg,"—Hardy began,—the eagerness with which he had thought to bring forward his question on the subject of the lecture suddenly ebbing, . . . "do you think . . ." His hand dropped, not being met. Gregg had paused, stood in an attitude of civil, waiting forbearance, his face wholly impassive . . . nothing more.

The young man pulled himself together, mechanically begged pardon for having detained the other, so draw-

ing back. Gregg bowed formally, then went his way. Hardy did the same when the last echo of footsteps had ceased in the corridor. And his heart was sick and sore. . . .

Within half an hour Hardy Shannon, carrying a shapeless blanket bundle in a strap, stepped into a florist's shop, where he selected a bunch of violets of very modest proportions. "For all that and all that," he said to himself, "my lady Rose shall have her posy!"

The violets ordered sent anonymously to a certain address familiar now to the florist, Hardy swung himself on a street-car marked Falconer's Heights. At the terminal he found Mary Minot, as he expected, waiting to join him in climbing to the summit. A glance into the girl's face conveyed assurance that the light of peace and love for which he longed was shining there for him. And Mary perceived, as she met his glance, that he was in need of such light. Characteristically neither spoke then or later of what was conveyed by the other's look.

Reaching the top they beat their way along a trail known well to themselves which led to a splendid boulder outjutting not far from the crest. Here with practised hand Hardy adjusted the cushion and blanket he had carried in his strap and gave a hand to Mary to mount to her throne. Sunset was at hand. The wide landscape below them, with the city, was suffused with yellow haze; behind them bare branches and twigs of forest trees were etched sharply against blue sky.

Around them rustled dry leaves, fallen in heaps of burnt gold and russet red, their pungent scent filling the air. The wistfulness of November, its severity and its repose, enclosed them.

"I wanted to bring you some violets, Mary," Hardy remarked, turning to look up as he lay stretched his length at her feet. "But I'm rather glad I didn't."

"So am I," laughed Mary lightly. "What significance could hothouse violets have in this November afternoon outdoors?"

"Well, you know, bonny Mary of Argyle, that violets are nice even when they are irrelevant. They can convey joy or grief, sympathy or rapture,—anything you like,—even in November. Don't be scoffing at my wish to bring you violets! I have been sending them, I would have you know, to another lady whom I love. Not many of them, I admit. As many as I could pay for, though," and with rueful mocking Hardy drew out from his pocket a scant array of silver and copper coins.

"How long has that got to last?" Mary asked, scanning the coins with thrifty though merry eyes.

Hardy shrugged his shoulders.

"Until I get some more," he laughed.

"Poor boy! The Webster Street people don't realize that it costs you anything to live, do they?"

"Not quite. If they will only come around pretty soon, as they do from time to time, with fifteen or twenty dollars, it will be all right. My board bill is staring me out of countenance at the moment."

"I think it's wrong, Hardy, anyway, for them to be

so slow. It isn't really fair. They don't expect to do their work for nothing. Those men earn a lot of money in these days."

"Yes, but just think how everything costs since the war! Rent and food are awfully dear. So are operations."

"Operations?"

"Why, yes. Almost every one in our church has to have one, it seems to me, sooner or later. Sickness, even, costs a fortune and families always have that. One of my deacons told me that his father, a very old man who lives with him, was failing but they didn't see how they could possibly afford to have him die. Dying is terribly dear now."

"Hardy, how cold-blooded!"

"It was not meant so. Mary, shall you mind if we have to live always in just this fashion,—counting pennies and waiting anxiously for pay day? You see next year I shall be ready for work."

Mary considered the question dispassionately.

"Why, I don't think I should like to live so always. Probably I shouldn't. But I'll take my end of what comes all right. But why should you expect to live on the Webster Street Mission basis always, you dear old goose? Don't you know that you are perfectly well fitted to earn a decent living? Men in the ministry get fair salaries, don't they?"

"A few do. Most of them don't. The average of our churches is rather poor."

"But you, my Hardy," laughed Mary, "being much more than an average man, will surely, in time, com-

mand a more than average church with corresponding income. Honestly, I think this kind of talk is horribly mercenary. Let's cut it out!"

"So I say," Hardy spoke humbly and Mary noticed that the anxiety did not leave his face. "Only you see, my darling," as he spoke he stretched both arms up and clasped her round young arms in his hands, so looking searchingly up into her face,—"you see I am on the wrong side to rise in the ministry in this present day. It costs something now for a Christian minister to hold up the Cross of Christ as the hope of men. Do you realize that?"

Mary sat in silence for a little while, deep musing in her eyes. Hardy loosened his hold upon her and dropped back into his place.

"Aren't you glad, Hardy? It is like the early days."

The words were scarcely more than whispered.

"Yes, I am glad now. Most of the time. I hope I shall be always. But I don't always find it *easy,* even now, to be glad—even in these days of no responsibility, when I have all I really need. But you know it isn't the material part that hurts especially. Except for you by and by."

"*What* hurts? You will have to tell me."

Mary bent over, a hand caressing his hair, all the maternal instinct of her swiftly dominant.

"Mary," the answer came slowly, reluctantly, "it hurts to flock alone—to know that the fellows look at you as being—oh, a good all-around chap and all that, but being headed the wrong way—being a mediæval-

minded dogmatist, all that sort of thing. They are sorry for me. That's the worst of it! I meet it everywhere, only I don't care since I don't meet it with you, —you are all that really counts, you know."

"No, Hardy," Mary spoke gravely enough now, "I am not all that counts. Tell me what it is besides—that counts."

"Well, among the professors it is perfectly accepted that I am a lamentable 'reactionary.' One or two of them like me for it, but with most of them it simply signifies that I am no scholar. They believe that I am unwilling to think—to face intellectual severities. You see the Rationalism that Germany has wished on us has captured colleges and seminaries pretty completely here in the East. Churches too. Certainly the influential ones."

"I know, of course, that it is the fashion."

"Oh, yes. And you know a fellow sometimes is craven coward enough . . ."

"To wish he was in fashion," Mary completed. "Don't let that worry you, my dear. Be thankful that you're not a super-man, but just regular human. I am. We both know perfectly well, you old guard, that you would die a thousand deaths before you would surrender."

"Wouldn't I though!" Hardy spoke under his breath.

When Sunday came Hardy Shannon, reinforced by his Mary Minot's steadfast spirit, as also by a small payment, on account of services rendered, by the

treasurer of the Webster Street Mission,—small, but large enough to banish the spectre of his unpaid board bill,—was able to meet the demands upon him in good form.

The evening congregation surprised him by its numbers, for the little house was crowded. A cheering sight this to a man not overconfident of his own powers. A sense as of being strengthened by the good hand of his God upon him lifted Shannon far above the plane of care and controversy that night, and the "lost radiance" of the Gospel message shone through all his words and ways.

It was unusually long before the church was emptied at the close of the service, this not only because of the many people, but because of those who stayed for a word with the young preacher.

Hardy thought he had seen the last lingerer depart from the vestibule and turned to the tower stair to run up for a moment to his study, when he observed a stranger of distinguished appearance, who had obviously lingered within the little auditorium, stepping into view.

As he came nearer Hardy at once recognized Professor Bolles of Peterboro University, a member of the congregation of All Souls' Church. He had met him several times in that first year of his in the Seminary, but that year seemed now a preëxistent state.

"I certainly did not see you in the congregation to-night, Professor Bolles," Hardy exclaimed as he greeted Bolles with cordiality and respect but with hidden wonder. He knew enough of this man's posi-

tion in the field of ethical philosophy to be puzzled at his presence in his humble evangelical mission chapel.

"Were you going up-stairs?" asked Bolles. "Have you got some kind of a retreat of your own up there?"

Answering in the affirmative Hardy invited the Professor perforce to go up with him to his study. He could not mistake the purpose of an interview of some kind impending. Much puzzled he led his visitor up the steep and narrow stair, and made him as comfortable in the small quarters above as his resources allowed.

Apparently Professor Bolles was in no haste, for he removed his overcoat and settled himself with an air of ease and leisure into the somewhat severe repose of Hardy's one armchair, asking then permission to light a cigar. After a few casual remarks on the attendance and service of the preceding hour, Bolles led the conversation, by way of allusion to the recent departure of Dr. Chance from All Souls' Church, to the causes and conditions which had resulted in that event. This being a point of vexed and contradictory interpretation to Hardy's ken, and involving as it had deep dismay and suffering to Dr. Chance's daughter, he frankly expressed his interest.

"Well, you see, Shannon," replied Professor Bolles, surprising Hardy afresh by his confidential and intimate manner, "the long and short of the matter was, Chance *had* to go."

"How so?" asked Hardy, inwardly on the defensive, Nancy being now uppermost in his mind. He could form no faintest guess as to what could have

prompted the unsought interview. But he was not going to have Nancy blamed.

"The fact was, as you would have been in a position to know if you had not been off to the wars, that the Doctor had worked his 'Social Gospel' out and didn't know what to turn to next."

"Really? Is that what was at the bottom of it?"

"Oh, yes. No doubt of it. I am not a real member of All Souls', only a member-by-marriage, so to speak. My wife belongs, and I serve on the Advisory Board. That is why I am bothering you with this intrusion to-night. For my own part I look at religion absolutely from the psychologist's point of view,—as a human device of defence, not wholly useless by any means either. But that is neither here nor there. Chance had plunged into his new adventure of church reconstruction a little rashly. He ought to have left a convenient exit by which to slip into some other line if that failed to work. But he didn't. So, as you know, he professed himself heart and soul given over to the 'larger ministry,' the diffusion and promotion of scientific sociology. You remember?"

"Oh, yes," Hardy replied. "When I was working with All Souls' Dr. Chance was much interested in his 'groups' and 'open forums,' all studying and discussing labour movements, collective bargaining and other economic problems."

"Yes. He was going to develop the 'civic conscience' of his constituency in short order. Well, it didn't develop. That's all. All Souls' weren't even as much interested in his Social Gospel as they were in the

Bible." Bolles smiled dryly. "It reflects on me, not on the Doctor only. I tried to popularize sociological psychology for him but that was as much of a failure as the rest of it. I don't know what's the matter with folks, do you?"

"I think so." Hardy laughed a little. "They are 'incurably religious,' you know."

Bolles puffed away at his cigar a moment in silence.

"That may be it," he said briefly at last. "And dancing is pretty popular just now, too. However, to return to the point,—Chance had been rather heedless in discarding the old way for the new, and when the new one gave way under him he was badly left, especially as there was a little stirring in certain 'groups' of the people of the Church who demanded that the Gospel itself, or something akin to it, should be given them. The Doctor could hardly negotiate that *volte-face,* so he negotiated this Welfare Commission to France, which has helped him out in good shape. He is making an excellent record over there, we hear. He ought to. He is a pretty able man."

"I like him," said Hardy simply.

"I wonder if you know," Bolles began again, after a little pause, "how much All Souls' like you, Mr. Shannon?"

"No. I've no idea. Didn't suppose many of them would remember me as long as this."

"They do remember you, and in a very unusual way, too. You got a pull on their heart-strings somehow or other. They think religion means something to you. That you really believe in the Bible. From a certain

point of view that is doubtless an advantage. It is a fact that your name is heard very often among All Souls', and a number of them have been coming off and on down here to attend your service."

"I thought I recognized one or two old acquaintances," Hardy replied still quite unconsciously.

"Yes. They say, 'There is a man who has got religion and, what is more, who has got it straight,—no pose at all.' They are awfully tired of experiments. I suppose you are able to guess what I am here for now?"

Hardy made no reply. His eyes were bent on a manuscript lying on his desk. He could guess at last and quite suddenly.

"Yes, you will, in all probability, receive other visits from other men with errands more definite than mine. I am merely taking preliminary soundings. See?"

Hardy nodded.

"Well, we may as well talk plainly, Shannon. Of course you won't stay long in a place like this. That goes without saying."

"I am bound to stand by the work here for the present," Hardy rejoined quickly.

"Oh, yes. That is all right. All Souls' are not in a hurry. Next Spring would be soon enough for them. You are doing admirable work here,—that is manifest, and should carry on a while yet. You have one year more in the Seminary, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Then, if anything should come of this overture, you could put in a certain amount of work,—just pulpit

work,—for All Souls' for that last year, with an assistant, you know, to keep up the pastoral end. How would that be?"

"But how about my theology, Professor Bolles? Aren't you forgetting the fact that I am that worst of modern heretics,—a man who denies the major premises of Modernism?"

"I have heard, we all have heard, that you were a little 'off,' if I may use the term, in your theological positions, but, don't you see, Shannon, that in this time of transition, this *Sturm und Drang* period, any man you think of is likely to be a little 'off,' or a little 'on,' —not quite hitting the precise mark, if there is any. We recognize that. A reasonable latitude would certainly be given to Dr. Chance's successor, especially to a young man who might naturally be blazing his trail still. And, furthermore, it is well known that you *inherit* the old Tradition with its dogmas and its conservatism. It is not, with you, merely a matter of taste. It takes a man a while, naturally, to shake off those old restraints and prepossessions. You would find All Souls' inclined to be patient in this particular, I am sure."

"But suppose that I have no idea of shaking off the old Tradition?" asked Hardy in matter-of-fact fashion.

Professor Bolles shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, well, my dear fellow, I don't suppose it hurts a man to cling for a while yet to the Hebrew mythology or the New Testament legends if they appeal to him. Each generation has to be the inheritor of its religion

as well as the creator of it. If you should stick to the inheriting a little longer than some others, we can trust to your moving on into the creating phase in course of time. It is really only a question of time, you know. The choice is not any longer between the Old Christianity and the New. It is between the New Christianity and *no* Christianity."

"And the New Christianity—how far is that removed from the Higher Hedonism?"

There was a glint of mischief in Hardy's eyes as he asked the question. Professor Bolles's paper, read before the Peterboro Symposium three years earlier, had been published in an ethical review since that time.

"Not far!"

Rising with a sardonic smile as he made this brief rejoinder, the Professor, his hands in his pockets, essayed a turn about the room, but its narrow compass brought him to a halt. Turning, he faced Hardy with the question:

"Well, what is the upshot? Have we got anywhere?"

"I think not, Professor."

"However, I may suggest to the men in power in All Souls' that you are open to conviction along the line we have discussed?"

"No, sir. I appreciate the consideration shown me, but my conviction is settled already. And my choice. During my Seminary course I hope to belong to this Mission, if they continue to wish for my service. And for life I belong to the Old Christianity, as it was received from the Apostles,—is now committed to us."

Professor Bolles looked the young man steadily in the face.

"Do you realize, my friend, where this will land you?"

"No one can realize that. We cannot see into the future. All I know is that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. Not for its dilution."

XXVI

NEW YEAR'S EVE

"I HAVE a letter from Mrs. Douglas Gregg, *chère mére.*"

It was Nancy Chance who spoke. She was sitting as if quite at home in a sunny window of the Melrose manse, a work-table filled with small flannel garments in an unfinished condition before her. Mrs. Shannon, in cloak and bonnet, had just entered the room.

"Oh, what does Mrs. Gregg say, Nancy? Is there any change?"

"No, no change. She never sees Hardy. But she writes of the mysterious handful of flowers which, she says, never fails to come to her from some nameless source each week. She is sure they are sent by Hardy, —to show that *he* has not changed. Do you believe that is so?"

Mrs. Shannon now joined Nancy at the work-table. As she drew up a low chair her face reflected the painful perplexity of the tidings from Peterboro.

"Yes. I believe Mrs. Gregg is right," she said. "It would be like Hardy to do that, they two having been such peculiarly good friends."

"She misses him dreadfully, poor, old darling," said Nancy, glancing at the letter in her lap. "And she has no slightest guess, any more than you and I have,

of what it is in particular which has estranged her husband from Hardy."

"Still she did write you in October that Professor Gregg told her that he and Hardy had had a disagreement along theological lines; also that it would be better for them both that Hardy should not come to the house."

"Hardy himself has written you as much as that, hasn't he?"

"Yes. And it is understood, again, that I am not to ask questions," saying which Mrs. Shannon smiled a little ruefully. After a pause she exclaimed, lifting her eyes, a new light in them, to Nancy's face, "Do you know what is coming, what I *feel*, I mean, to be coming?"

"Tell me."

"Before very long there is going to be a great reaction from the present tendency towards rejection of the Bible. A sweep, sudden perhaps, perhaps gradual, will bring the mind and heart of the Church at large back to the primitive Faith and its simplicity. If that comes, Nancy, if it really is to come, my boy's trouble, for I know this estrangement from Douglas Gregg is a deep grief to him, will be healed. May it come soon!"

"Don't worry about our Hardy," replied Nancy. "A man who has *chère mére* to comfort him and Mary Minot to worship the ground he walks on, needs a few drawbacks to keep him from losing his head. But we will pray for the peace of Jerusalem all the same, won't we?"

Mrs. Shannon and Nancy here broke off their conversation and their sewing for the poor of the parish, turning to a matter nearer at hand. Dr. Hugh Gregg was bringing his daughter, Dorothy, that evening to spend New Year's Day at Melrose. There were still some things to do in preparation for their arrival, also for the festive dinner with which it was to be celebrated.

As they went about the house together Mrs. Shannon observed Nancy's effective precision in all her methods of work; she saw also how defiance and bitterness had given way in the girl's face to a new repose, touched deeply with sadness, but with no repining. Suddenly Mrs. Shannon felt a fresh spring of joy and courage welling up in her own heart. For she realized that already Nancy was as a child to her. Her house, after all, was not left to her desolate!

The New Year was at hand. Nearly three months had passed since Nancy Chance had come to Melrose. She came, not as a passing visitor but as a chosen, permanent companion; and while coming in this relation she was swiftly advancing to that of a daughter in the house, a place, as Mrs. Shannon sadly admitted to herself, that "poor Amy" had never quite filled.

There had been a stormy scene in Peterboro, in the Chance family, early in October ending in Dr. Chance's daughter leaving her father's house. It had begun with notice served on Nancy deliberately by her grandmother, in her father's presence, to the effect that, by reason in part of doubts thrown upon her character, but far more by reason of the shocking excesses practised

under Nancy's eyes and as it seemed under her influence, at the gatherings of the members of that very questionable organization, the Mortals, her poor father had been forced to quit his pastorate. Naturally Nancy's course had been terrible for him as well as for the young people coming under her influence. Most of all, for herself.

Nancy had turned in alarm to appeal to her father for disclaimer, but he declined either to deny or to corroborate the accusation. He admitted that the situation had been a serious one for him, things having, as he had been credibly informed, gone to such a pitch in the rooms of the Mortals that rumours were heard of their being raided by the police on the score of illegal use of liquor. Very likely other considerations entered in, as he had heard reports of gambling, dancing and so forth of a questionable character.

"And you believe these reports?" Nancy had asked the question, desperation clutching at her heart as she realized that both her father and her grandmother obviously and readily had given place in their minds to personal slander of herself. Dr. Chance signified in reply to her question that he believed there was some foundation for them.

Nancy, controlling herself by sheer force of will to quiet, unhurried speech, had explained the situation as regarded the Mortals. For herself she could not explain.

Convinced that it was useless to prolong her efforts to win the young people now composing the club to her ways of thinking as regarded their various pursuits of

dancing, drinking and the like, as she had on her return from Europe sincerely hoped and believed she could do, she had persuaded them to disband, and to give up the rooms. This had been done.

As concerned the dancing, the use of wine, the playing cards for small stakes, the immodest dress, she was able to declare positively that none of these things, in the gatherings of the Mortals, were carried beyond the ordinary usage now prevailing in Peterboro society. The young people came to the rooms often on their way to dances given at the homes of influential friends of Dr. Chance himself, and of members of his church; they amused themselves precisely as they would later. For herself she detested the present popular modes, but, single-handed, she could not stem the tide. She had not at first on her return understood the new laws against the use of wine. Since she understood them no wine had been used at the Mortals. Her friends, Mr. Shannon and Miss Minot, had come to her aid with all their hearts and with wise and generous cooperation and counsel. They trusted her. They believed that her purpose from the first was to help the young set, who, at least, had welcomed her back with affection and with faith in her as clean of heart and life. It was only the trust of these friends which had kept her from despair in the months since her return to Peterboro.

To all this Dr. Chance and his mother had listened seriously but without emotion. The former was full of his own new and enlarged plans of action; Madame Chance, of her own prospect of a changed abode. In

the plans of neither, as Nancy soon learned, had she part or lot. Her father, with a general admission that she had made the best defence open to her in the circumstances, proceeded to inform his daughter that he had been sought as member of a distinguished International Commission for Goodwill and Welfare. His acceptance would involve his making headquarters the coming year in France, but his duties would include much travel.

His resignation was to be presented at once as pastor of All Souls' Church. Their house would be rented as it stood. Madame Chance would make her home in Philadelphia with relatives. What would be Nancy's choice for herself? It was understood that she could not accompany him; also that he would make her a modest but suitable allowance for her maintenance.

With hardly a moment's hesitation Nancy had replied that her friend Mrs. Shannon of Melrose, just then visiting in Peterboro, was soon to return to her home, in which, as things had quite recently shaped, she was left now wholly alone. If Mrs. Shannon would put up with one as a companion who could bring but poor credentials even from her own family Nancy would choose among such possibilities as were left open to her, to go to Melrose with Mrs. Shannon on her return.

And so it had fallen out.

The house was far from desolate when the small company gathered about the table that evening. Hugh Gregg, full of cordial cheer, was unconsciously domi-

nant and yet, as Nancy observed, gentle, considerate, as he had never been in earlier days. Dorothy revelled in a glow of excitement over the "glorious time" Daddy had given her at Christmas in New York. Hardly less ardent was her celebration of the merits of her new school. But that was now an old story here.

"Really, Mischance!" the girl cried in her naive fashion in the midst of dinner, "did you ever see any one improve as much as I have? I mean to say," she added with playful pedantry, "in a given time?"

They all laughed her down unmercifully, but all in private registered assent to the proposition.

But Dr. Gregg, signifying that children should be seen and not heard at the table by a repressing gesture, turned now to his hostess with the remark:

"Mrs. Shannon, I have seen your son Hardy quite lately. In fact I heard him preach a few weeks ago."

Mrs. Shannon coloured for pleasure like a girl. Her eyes shone as they were wont to do with the bare mention of Hardy's name.

"Then you must have been in Peterboro," she said.

"Yes. I went down for a week-end on the business of disposing of my house," Dr. Gregg returned soberly. "Tiresome business, but I got through with it. I spent Sunday at 17 Locust Street, that is, from noon on. The morning I chose to give to the very unusual indulgence of going to church."

"You did well," Nancy interjected.

"I did very well. Better perhaps than you can imagine." The Doctor spoke with unusual gravity.

"But I came very near coming away empty. A good hundred better men than I were turned away a bit later. I assure you, Mrs. Shannon, it is necessary to get in line quite early to find a seat in that Webster Street Church nowadays."

"It was not crowded when I was there in October, was it, Nancy?" commented Mrs. Shannon, making a valiant effort to hold her pride and joy in check.

"There was a full house then, nothing more," Nancy confirmed. "But I have been hearing reports of this kind before."

"Hardy has not written of any unusual interest." Again Mrs. Shannon spoke.

"Just like him not to! Also just like him casually to turn down the other day the overtures of All Souls' Church. The leading spirits there took it for granted that a boy like him would jump at the chance, when it came, to change Webster Street insignificance for the chastened splendours of All Souls'."

"And didn't he jump at *all?*" exclaimed Dorothy, dismay in her knitted brows.

"Not an inch, my dear. He was not even interested. One of the men told me about it. Not Hardy himself! Oh, never! He hasn't told you of it here at home probably."

"Not a word," responded Mrs. Shannon.

"Just like him again! But, anyway, Mrs. Shannon, I think the growth in attendance on his services, and the place he is winning, have come so gradually that Hardy scarcely takes note of it himself. Furthermore, the fact is, your son, as you possibly know

better than I, is thinking a great deal more about his message than he is about himself, or any personal impression he may make."

For a moment there was silence. Then the Doctor added thoughtfully:

"This is the reason, no doubt, that all Peterboro is stirred by his preaching."

"Were you stirred?"

Nancy Chance asked the question with quick impulse, surprising herself. Hugh Gregg looked at her a moment in silence.

"Yes, dear Nancy, I *was* stirred," he responded. "There are more things in heaven and earth, I have begun at last to realize, than my philosophy has comprehended."

After dinner Nancy and Dorothy had a few moments alone in the chamber that they were to share together. Suddenly Dorothy threw her arms around her friend and looking with piercing wistfulness of appeal in her face, exclaimed:

"Oh, Mischance, if only you will marry Daddy! You can't think how kind and good he is getting to be! He used to be rather savage sometimes, but he never is now. And you know how he wants you to. Anybody can see that. Why shouldn't you? It is perfectly easy to love him. Really! I am crazy over him myself! And then, dearest, you are so unselfish, I should think you would be glad to for my sake. Just think what an excellent influence you would have over me!"

Nancy laughed as she had not laughed in months,

she thought, and Dorothy joined her in spite of the manifest seriousness and sincerity of her plea.

"Can't I have this excellent influence over you, Dolly dear, in my maiden state?" Nancy asked. "What nonsense you are talking! Run along now and do your hair. You look like a little angel since you have ceased to bob it."

With this Nancy escaped from Hugh Gregg's daughter, but only to fall promptly into the hands of Hugh Gregg himself.

"Mrs. Shannon has gone over to the church," he informed Nancy, "and she left word for Dorothy to follow her if she would like to. They are to repeat the Christmas carols."

Dorothy calling down from the landing that she was violently insane on the subject of carol singing, Doctor Hugh and Nancy soon found themselves left alone together in the cordial intimacy of the library. Nancy's heart beat hard and quick as, with manner of complete quietness, she took up her knitting work and seated herself under the low light of the table lamp.

"Well, Doctor Hugh," she said, "are things going as well as they seem to be . . . with Dorothy . . . with you? Some way I feel that they are."

"I am glad if you feel so, my dear Mischance," Hugh Gregg replied smiling rather grimly. "Nothing can go well, really *well,* for me, as you know perfectly, for all these pious platitudes you urge upon me, unless I can have promise of the one thing which is necessary to me."

The place was so still that Nancy could hear the

smooth click of her ivory needles. Moments passed, but she would neither speak nor lift her eyes to meet the look which she felt bent upon her. Both their faces were touched to sadness, not alone by the weight of bitter experiences which could not be forgotten, but also by suspense for the future. It was a moment when both knew that the issues of their lives were at stake.

"Nancy, can you not see it as I do?" Hugh Gregg broke the silence at last. "I love you as I have loved you for years. I want you for my wife. I have the right to ask you . . . now. . . . I am not going to complain, not going to appeal to your sympathies. I really would prefer *not* to have you marry me for the sake of giving me a home! You are perfectly capable of it. . . . A sense of duty on your part, my girl, won't meet the case."

Nancy laid down her work now and lifted her eyes courageously then to his. The sadness in them smote Gregg's heart.

"I have thought it through now, Hugh," she said very gently. "I know that what you want cannot be. But I love you, you only. I shall love you always. When you have a wife some day, as perhaps you may, I shall love her, too,—if she will let me."

"Oh, Nancy, have mercy on me!" the man cried out.

"I have the same mercy on you that I have on myself, Hugh," she answered. "What you said a moment ago is as true of me as it was true of you. I have loved you for years, as you have me. We had

no right to that love. It was not guilty in any gross sense or degree, but it was forbidden."

"And so must be expiated! Is that your idea?"

"Not exactly." Nancy hesitated a little, meeting his impatience with love's forbearance. "It is this way. I do not feel, myself, that a marriage which has been desired and which has, in the end, been made possible by divorce, can be altogether, or often, a truly happy marriage. At least I think it cannot be to my idea a blessed one. Even if you and I dared now to take our chance, I count that we have lost it by the fact that we did love each other when we had no right. Because this is so I feel that marriage for us would be ill-starred."

"Can you not let me be judge of that, Nancy?" The question came with unlooked-for quietness on the Doctor's part.

"No, dear Hugh. You cannot judge for me. It is settled. I am vowed to the life of celibacy in my own heart . . . a fact for you and me alone. I have no place in my life for thought or need of marriage. It is not the only fulfilment. It has no appeal to me, since . . ." here Nancy looked up and, her eyes, meeting the desolation of her lover's, tears overflowed at last.

Hugh Gregg knew Nancy better than to try further argument. Her religious nature, hidden from the sight of others, was known by him, had been known these years. In a matter of conscience she was inflexible.

"Well, dear Nancy, what is to be the next chapter?

I cannot let you wander around the world alone. . . . After all, you must admit *you are mine.*"

Nancy's response was conveyed in a smile whose splendour caused the defeated man suddenly to count himself conqueror. . . .

A moment later she was giving him in matter-of-fact fashion an outline of her future as she saw it. She and Mrs. Shannon had discovered that they belonged together, for now and for always. Each gave the other what the other most needed, the one being a lonely mother, the other a forsaken child. . . . In the Spring, when they were to leave the manse, they would take up their dwelling in a comfortable and rather spacious house on an unfashionable street of Melrose. This house they proposed to make as home-like and charming as the manse itself in its way; and they planned to constitute it, on a small scale, a hostel for New York working girls. Such a work they hoped to swing successfully and permanently.

Doctor Hugh nodded sober acquiescence.

"You could do it,—you two," he said.

"And it will not be just a hostel for needy strangers, Hugh. It will be our home and it will have the spirit and atmosphere of this home. You and Dorothy and Hardy Shannon and precious Mary Minot will be members of our family, welcome whenever you will come for as long as you can stay. You will come, Hugh?" she asked, and the brave lips quivered as she spoke.

"Yes, Nancy. I will come, a pensioner on your bounty, my girl, by your grace and by the grace of God."

XXVII

"THE HIGH SOUL CLIMBS THE HIGH WAY"

NEW YEAR'S EVE in Peterboro also.

At 17 Locust Street the master of the house, kept indoors by a slight indisposition, was visited by one and another of his friends who had been assured of welcome. Mr. Searing, the young scholar connected in recent years with the Biblical Department of the Divinity School, was about departing. As he and the Professor stood to prolong their talk a moment in the narrow hall the bell rang. Searing stepped to the door and opened it upon Judge Sawyer, Kate meanwhile appearing in the far reaches of the hall to perform her function and vanishing noiselessly as she saw it already performed.

Searing gone, Gregg drew his latest guest into the study. Here a fire of noble and holiday proportions roared up chimney, also a modest array of food and drink was set out.

"Happy New Year, Judge," said Gregg heartily. "Have a frugal cup of cocoa and a cake, a real Christmas cake after an old-world formula, they tell me. It's the least I can do, really, to fortify your inner man in some fashion, since I have been so bold as to bring you this long way on business of my own."

"Business!" exclaimed the Judge as he gave himself with zest to enjoyment of the refreshment before him.

"Don't let's talk business on New Year's Eve. My dear friend, I am honoured, to put it mildly, to be asked to come here. It is always an event to meet you and, furthermore, I am relieved to see you up and about. Not really ill, are you?"

"Oh, not at all. Taking my turn at a few of the Caliban cramps and pinches of old age. That's all. It will be out, out with the brief candle, you know, before very long."

"Now, sir, I submit that this is no way to celebrate New Year's Eve! Let's agree to cut out these disconcerting allusions to time's flight. For myself I decline to take any stock in them. As for you, you are looking really better, I think, than three months ago. I have not seen you, except twice, I believe, at the Symposium, since we had our extraordinary assize at Dr. Loring's."

Gregg nodded but made no other reply.

"Do you know," the Judge went on, "that that young Hardy Shannon had you theologians beaten to a frazzle on your own line that night,—as far as immediate impression goes, I mean? But really, Gregg, that was a cruelly hard place to put a boy in, and he came out of it gallantly. Didn't you recognize a singular radiance of spirit which seemed to belong to him, yourself?"

"Myself?" Gregg repeated the word meditatively. "Yes. *Even I* . . . I recognized your aside also, Judge, that night! I saw that you were impressed."

The Judge glanced up shrewdly.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!"

Gregg repeated the famous phrase slowly. "What did you mean by that?"

"Well, Gregg," the other began soberly, "how can we seriously claim to be Christians any more,—in the old primitive sense of saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs? *The tradition is broken!* That we must all admit. I saw a copy of the *Jewish Chronicle* last week, read an editorial in which the writer pointed out that,—courageous theologians in universities and seminaries as well as Christian ministers having practically overthrown all the fundamental dogmas of Christianity against which the Jews have been protesting for nearly two thousand years,—there seems no longer reason for division between the two. That was the substance of it.

"And it isn't a very steep overstatement either, Professor, in view of what you learned men have been giving out to us of the misrepresentations, to use no harsher word, of the New Testament, is it?"

Gregg shook his head with lifted eyebrows.

"Very well. If you grant that, why should you call in question my inference that we in the Modern Camp, lay and clergy, are not, in the strict sense, Christian?"

"You know Searing? the man you met here as you came in?" asked the Professor.

"Of course. An assistant of some sort, is he not, in your department? The man they are grooming to take your place ten years hence, as I understand it, if he makes good. Well, what has that to do with the question?"

"Only that, he being one of the coming trainers of the 'clergy,' you can set the horoscope rather definitely for the type of Christianity of the men who will go into the ministry out of Peterboro, say in another decade."

The Judge had dropped his chin into his hand and, as he leaned back in his easy chair, fixed his eyes with intentness upon the other's face.

"Look here! I recall something about that man," he broke out. "He has been giving parlour lectures for one of the fashionable clubs of young women here in town on the Græco-Roman World in the time of Christ, or some such line. Our daughters have attended the lectures and come home simply reeking of paganism. They assure their mother and me that Christianity is nothing more than the Myth of a Redeemer-god borrowed from Greek cults, and a lot of other rubbish like that."

"My dear Judge," and Douglas Gregg raised a deprecating hand, "have a care! That, we are assured, is in effect the *next step in New Testament Study*. All our Christian rites, sacraments, all the mysticism of John and Paul, are simply borrowed from the pagan cults of their day. To dig into the processes by which this came about is held up to us now as the 'Next step forward,' as a '*most promising, a most alluring field*' for the student of the New Testament! This gives your Hebrew brother substantial support, does it not?"

"Great Heavens, Gregg!" burst out the Judge. "Do you seriously tell me that this is the work Searing

is doing for our students for the Christian ministry? Is this teaching acceptable to you?"

"No, sir!" Gregg shouted the denial fiercely, his face working with the stress of his feeling. "No, sir! It is not acceptable to me. Do you see in what direction we are drifting?—not drifting, plunging! Already we have lost the fervour, the intensity, the devotion of faith. Ethical societies are taking the place of our churches. We have lost our message to the heathen world. We have lost the divine authority of revelation, and, with it, all authority for belief and conduct. We have substituted the theories of materialism for the Word of God. Christianity has even now become, in many so-called Christian circles, little better than an interesting survival. We look at Germany and reflect complacently, 'There is a nation which has lost her soul.' Do we ever stop to consider *how* she lost her soul, and why! I tell you, Sawyer, *we must have an Evangel or we perish.*" There was a pause. Then he asked: "Have you seen Bertrand Russell's Credo of Despair?"

The Judge, dazed, shook his head. Gregg took a review from the table and read aloud a paragraph ending with the sentence:

"Only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."

"This is the spiritual climax reached by modern materialistic philosophy, when the Word and Law of God Almighty are discarded," he commented. "This is what awaits us if the race is to set out on an uncharted sea without star or compass."

Gregg paused, sighed heavily and leaning back closed his eyes. Judge Sawyer gazed at the solemn, wasted face for a moment in speechless amazement.

"This from you! . . . from you, Douglas Gregg . . . ?" he exclaimed at last. "Here is surely a great Reversal! I supposed . . ."

"Yes, Judge Sawyer,"—again the Professor spurred on his flagging energy. "Of course you supposed that all these things I mention inhere in the school of thought to which I confessedly belong. . . . You say to yourself, This man is himself largely responsible for just the state of things which has been brought about; brought about in what we have been taught to name the 'scientific quest of truth.' My friend, what is truth? It is an old problem. The One who came once for all to solve it was hanged on a tree." Again Gregg bent his head.

"But, my dear Professor Gregg," began his friend, "I cannot believe that, even if Christianity itself is threatened by a congeries of influences,—philosophic, materialistic and the like, largely the outcome and sequelæ of the war,—that you can . . . that anything could happen to cause you to take a reactionary position, or to be willing for a moment to falter in your scientific quest for truth." Here the Judge paused, half intimidated by the other's look as he rose, took a step forward and stood towering formidable, imperious, above him.

"Judge Sawyer," he said, "you may call me a reactionary freely, for that is what I am. What I am called is of no consequence to me, for I am con-

cerned now solely with reality. No matter when, or why, I have awakened to the fact that the truth of the Christian religion is contained in the Bible itself, not in any naturalistic reconstruction of the origins. *Truth* has not been found by our search into Pagan and legendary sources. Nor is it to be found in the unguided 'experience' of the mystic. I come back to the Word. Revelation, history, experience, theology are here in agreement. Neither one of these suffices alone. Listen, Sawyer!—*God so loved the world,* the revelation; *that He sent His Son,* the event; *that whosoever believeth in Him,* the experience; *shall have life,* redemption,—theology. You look at me in wonder as to why I have lived my life and done my work these fifty years without perceiving this.

"I can only tell you that my eyes are open at last. I am ready to break with my past, to be counted a fool for Christ's sake. What I have held as the passion for 'truth' has been, in part, at least, the scholar's passion for vindicating his hard-won 'learning,' for pressing his opinions and theories to their conclusions. I have done honest work. Some of it will, I venture to believe, stand the test of time. It has been not all destructive, but, Sawyer, Radical Criticism has run its course. It has had its day. I,—yes even I,—can see now that the importance of documentary criticism has been greatly exaggerated by the school to which I have belonged. Much as we have shunned the term 'destructive' as applied to our work, its function in the main has been such. The hour has struck to call a halt, for Christianity itself is threatened with destruc-

tion just at this crucial hour of human history. It is time to face about, to cease to tear down and begin to build up."

"My dear Gregg, you must not agitate yourself. We will talk of this another time. I beg you do not pursue this subject," saying which Judge Sawyer laying a hand on the Professor's arm steadied him to his chair, then bending above him with kindly solicitude said:

"We all come to turning points in experience. Some like you, who are a seer, as I have often named you, come even to mounts of vision. Now,—Good-night."

Douglas Gregg detained him with a touch of his hand and a smile, melancholy yet tender.

"Never call me a seer again, good friend. You may give that name to the young man we were speaking of,—Hardy Shannon. Go and hear him preach Christ! I have. He will help build again the waste places, for his ruling passion is the love of Christ,—not the lust of learning. *He sees the invisible.* . . . Judge, a moment. My resignation takes effect at the year's close. I mailed it to you this afternoon. It is irrevocable this time. Keep your eye on Hardy Shannon. When he first came to the Seminary, curiously enough, I dreamed of him as the man to succeed me when the time should come,—the man, as I thought, peculiarly adapted for the work,—really qualified by his rare personal and intellectual power and by his spiritual intuition. We have been estranged. . . . It is months since I have seen him. It is a sad story, but of the past . . . or so I trust. . . . When

I think of a man like Searing with his fashionable prattle of Hellenistic myths as 'sources' of Christianity, my heart dies within me. But I can't deny that it is the next step in the way I have been going."

"Drop Searing out of sight, my friend! While I am on the Board his name will never be brought forward. It is not in the hands of men of that strain that the work of our School is to be trusted. Rest assured that I will keep my eyes on Hardy Shannon."

Gregg's relief was manifest; but his seriousness was increased rather than lightened, as he spoke again.

"One thing more and I will not hold you any longer. I can never hope to retrieve the harm done in the past, but in the little time which remains to me, Judge Sawyer, it is my solemn purpose, God helping me, to hold up as inspired the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour of men, His Cross, His Resurrection, His oneness with God."

The hands of the clock on the mantel in Gregg's study showed that the year was nearing its last minutes when a sound aroused the old scholar who still sat where Judge Sawyer had left him alone in the quiet place.

Walking slowly to the study door he was faced on the threshold by Hardy Shannon. Their hands met in eager grasp. For a moment they faced each other in silence.

"You used your key, as I bade you," Douglas Gregg commented presently in matter-of-fact fashion. "I

am glad you have kept it . . . all these long months. Sit down, my boy. You are welcome, welcome as sky and stars to prison'd men, as the poets used to say."

The Professor took his own chair and Hardy Shannon stood near. Gregg looked up into his face with the indescribably wistful fondness of an old man.

For a moment there was silence. Then Hardy spoke.

"It was good, sir, to get your note . . . good that you let me come."

"You come late. I was afraid you would not get here this year. I counted the minutes."

"I only came back from Annisdale at eleven o'clock; I have been there all day."

"What are you doing at Annisdale? I cannot remember. . . . It is so long since I knew . . ."

"No, sir, you would not know. Mary Minot lives at Annisdale. She is a teacher here in town but is at home just now on vacation."

"Is she your sweetheart, Hardy?"

"Yes, sir. The very sweetest heart,—the very sweetest sweetheart a man ever had."

"Very good. Bring her to see us . . . to see my wife,—as quick as ever you can. Rose has missed you. Miserable me! But I have missed you yet more, Hardy. A just punishment. God be merciful to me a sinner."

"It is all right now, is it not, Professor Gregg? You don't believe I meant to do you harm . . . ?"

"I believe anything you say. But you must sit

down. You have been running. You are out of breath. Take a bite while I talk to you."

"Sir, I cannot. What I want is to listen to what you have to say to me with my body, my soul and my spirit."

"Yes, I *have* something to say, as I wrote you. And it is high time I said it. I wish to tell you that I am under a mighty obligation to your brother, Mr. Park Shannon. Listen and don't interrupt me. He did a diabolical thing, in fact I am not sure but he is the Devil himself. That small dark green book of his was malignant, it was insolent, it was dishonourable . . . in fact there are many other things to be said against it. *But it was true.*"

"Oh, no sir, it was not fair, not just."

"Wait! Wait! You must not interrupt me. No matter for detail, no matter for intent,—in essence the thing was true. It was a poisoned dart and it wounded sore, but in the end it stabbed my spirit broad awake. The way we were going . . . I mean, not *we* . . . the way *I* was going,—was straight towards the ultimate depths of Germany's materialistic philosophy, led by Semler and his followers. Your brother was right! That was the path I was pursuing and the verge towards which I was leading those foolish enough to follow me. Don't deny it, Hardy. You know I speak the truth."

Involuntarily in that moment each man's hand sought the hand of the other while their eyes met in eloquent silence.

The clock struck twelve.

"There, go along and sit down, my boy. We can't keep up to this concert pitch much longer."

Laughing, Hardy threw himself into the chair which waited for him, took up a cake and began to eat like a hungry boy.

"Katie's hand hasn't lost its cunning, I see," he remarked casually.

"You haven't forgotten Katie all this time . . ." Gregg murmured. . . . "By the way, Hardy! How much did it cost you to buy up that edition we wot of? I never reflected upon that end of it till yesterday."

"Really, I don't remember now," Hardy answered.

THE END

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